DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 185 592 CS 205 514

AUTHOR Davis, James E., Ed., And Others
TITLE Responding to the Basics Movement.
INSTITUTION Southeastern Ohio Council of Teachers of English.
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 100p.; The Southeastern Ohio Council of Teachers of English is an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English.
AVAILABLE FROM National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801 (Stock No. 40831, $3.50 member, $4.00 non-member)
JOURNAL CIT Focus: Teaching English Language Arts; v5 n3 Spr 1979

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Basic Skills; Childrens Literature; Elementary Secondary Education; *English Instruction; Higher Education; *Language Arts; Language Skills; Literacy; *Minimum Competencies; Teaching Methods; Vocational Education; Writing (Composition)

ABSTRACT

The 17 articles in this journal issue focus on a response to the basics movement. Specific topics covered in the articles include the following: a definition of literacy, the meaning of the basics, the back-to-the-basics movement from a historical-linguistic perspective, behavior modification and the teaching of English composition, developing practical literacy in college English, bringing learners and language together through literature, teaching real English in the vocational school, the basics for secretarial students, ways to help children develop language skills, teaching grammar, teaching process analysis, children's literature, midcareer management, the general public's attitude toward literacy, research support for the teaching of spelling, the basics of living, and using the power of comparison to teach the power of language. Continuing columns in the journal provide information about videotaping creative drama, book reports, and attitudes toward textbook selection in United States schools from 1840 to 1978. (FL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED185592

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Responding To The BASICS

Volume V, Number 3
Spring, 1979

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Southeastern Ohio Council of Teachers of English
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CS005595

SOCTE IS AN AFFILIATE OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
AND
THE OHIO COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

FOCUS: TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS is the official publication of The Southeastern Ohio Council of Teachers of English (SOCTE). It is published three times a year, in October, January, and May. Articles and news items about the teaching of English and Language Arts, especially in Southeastern Ohio, are invited. Letters in response to articles in FOCUS are particularly welcome. Footnotes should be avoided whenever possible by including documentation in the text. Send one copy with stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

James E. Davis, Hazel K. Davis, and James F. Gorman, Editors
FOCUS
Ellis Hall 385
Department of English Language and Literature
Ohio University
Athens, Ohio 45701

EMPHASES IN FUTURE ISSUES:

Fall, 1979: TEACHER EDUCATION IN READING
Deadline for submission: October 1, 1979

Winter, 1980: LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION: WHAT WORKS AND WHY
Deadline for submission: December 1, 1979

Copyright © 1979, The Southeastern Ohio Council of Teachers of English
Member: NCTE Information Exchange Agreement

FOCUS: TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Volume V | Spring 1979 | Number 3

RESPONDING TO THE BASICS MOVEMENT

Contents

Page

Reeling and Writhing--The Art of Literacy..... 1
by Margaret Miles

The Meaning of the Basics..... 8
by David Bergdahl

Back to the Basics: An Historical-Linguistic Perspective..... 14
by Elliot L. Judd

Behavior Modification and the Teaching of English Composition..... 19
by Harley L. Sachs

Back to Basics and College English: Developing Practical Literacy... 24
by Susan I. Schultz

Real Basics: Bringing Learners and Language Together Through Literature..... 27
by June Berkley

Teaching Real English in the Vocational School..... 30
by William L. Smith

ABC's For Secretarial Students..... 33
by Marilyn Carr

Here Comes the Integrity Kid or How to Help Children Develop Language by Bringing Words to Life..... 36
by Patricia I. Mahieu and Susan Van Camp

Gramo!..... 42
by Roberta Rollins

A "How To" on Teaching Process Analysis..... 44
by Jane M. Agee

Up, Up and Away to the World of Children's Literature..... 46
by Margaret Miles

Mid-Career Management..... 53
by Harley L. Sachs

There'll Always Be A Setright..... 56
by Carole Koontz

Research Support for Teaching Spelling..... 60
by W. Geiger Ellis

Note the Absence of Sympathy..... 63
by Bob Bullock

Using the Power of Comparison for Teaching the Power of Language..... 66
by Geraldine E. LaRocque

Continuing Columns

Teaching English in the Elementary School
Extending Videotaping Through Creative Drama..... 74
by Daniel Tutolo and JoAnne Martin-Reynolds

Teaching English in the Middle School
Book Reports..... 80
by Sue Holt

A Student's View of the Profession
Et tu, English Teacher? A Look at Attitudes Toward Text Selection in American Schools, 1840-1978..... 83
by Tina M. Curby

Professional

A Report on the Spring SOCTE Conference..... 87

Minutes of the SOCTE Annual Meeting..... 88

Responses to the Basics Movement..... 89

Two New Language Skills Listings..... 91

Many Competency Tests Are Trivial..... 91

Some Dos and Donts for College English Students..... 93

Contributor's Notes..... 94

"REELING AND WRITHING--THE ART OF LITERACY"

by
Margaret Miles

"When we were little," the Mock Turtle said to Alice, "we went to school in the sea. We had the best of education, in fact, we went to school everyday -- the extras included French, music and washing. I couldn't afford the extras so I only took the regular course, Reeling and Writhing and the different branches of Arithmetic--Ambition, Distraction and Uglification."[1]

I am afraid that if we spend any more energy advocating the back to basics movement or analyzing what is basic, our curriculum may begin to resemble the Mock Turtle's reeling, writhing and uglification.

Unfortunately, the back to basics movement is in vogue and rarely does a week go by when we don't hear statistics of test scores, attrition rates and the number of "illiterates" graduating from high school.

The reports are beginning to resemble the casualty figures for the Vietnam War that Walter Cronkite used to rattle off like baseball scores.

We all know the statistics and know we have intellectually wounded wandering about. One way we propose to cure the wounded is by inventing movements, campaigns and remedial programs. Relying on remedial programs to improve students' reading and writing is, according to a professor writing in THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION, "like swatting mosquitoes to prevent yellow fever." I fear once the name "Back to Basics" becomes stale we will most likely hear more about "Forward to Fundamentals," "Return to Relevancy" and I will not be surprised when "Leap to Literature" makes its debut!

Today, I am going to back away from the basics and focus on one word. The word often appears in alarming headlines, "Decline in Literacy" "The Literacy Crisis" "Are Our Students Illiterates?" What do we mean by literacy? What is a literate person?

As I began to think about these questions I was struck by a scene in Charles Dickens' BLEAK HOUSE written in 1851. Esther Summerson strolls into a little church when a marriage ceremony was concluding and the young couple had to sign the register. The bridegroom made a rude cross for his name; the bride did the same. Esther the narrator writes, "I had known the bride and knew she had distinguished herself in school. I could not help look at her with some surprise." The bride whispered to Esther, "He's a good fellow miss but can't write yet. I wouldn't want to shame him for the world."

This scene intrigued me because of the loyalty of the bride and the lack of writing skill. I decided to look at some of the historical interpretations of the word "literacy" and examine some of its connotations. If we are going to see and hear the word we should educate ourselves as to its meaning and its implications.

Most of us would without thinking define "literate" as the ability to read and write and know a little about literature.

I would like to give you a few examples from history before I offer a definition for literacy in 1978.

The word derives from a medieval definition which saw a literate person as one capable of reading Latin. In seventeenth century Sweden the ability to read a well-known passage from the Bible was the test for literacy -- no unfamiliar passages and no writing. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century in England the majority of the population did not know how to use letters to make a signature. It wasn't until well into the nineteenth century that the skill became widely learned. Literacy meant to be able to write one's name.

Before 1840 in France reading was the naming of letters and the pronunciation of words. Teachers weren't professionally trained. They used to indicate the subjects they knew how to teach by the placement of feathers in their caps. One feather for reading, two for arithmetic and three for Latin. One teacher only taught the first two rules of arithmetic, "She had heard of a third, but never learned it." To be efficient in reading the teachers had to recite, memorize and read the Bible. Even after the French government enforced two major reforms for public education, instruction was to promote the familiar in history and geography.

Educational standards in Scotland and the United States fared no better. This excerpt from the Sessional School in Edinburgh in 1851 sent to the American educators gives us an insight into the instruction of reading.[2]

> English reading consists of nothing more than the power of giving utterance to certain sounds on the perception of certain figures. If the child gathers any knowledge from the book before him, beyond that of color, form and position of the letters, it is to his own wisdom.

The primitive reading requirements revealed their inadequacies in this country when America entered World War I and a national literacy problem was discovered. It's interesting how the national government's concern with literacy has tended to follow a crisis pattern! Psychologists administered tests to recruits - The Army Alpha Test for "literate recruits," - The Beta for those who failed the first test. In 1918 30% of all men had to take the Beta Test.

These results led to the birth of graded and standard achievement tests. The standard of literacy was defined as the ability to comprehend unfamiliar passages.

The standards of literacy shifted from the ability to write one's name to the reciting of a familiar text to the reading of an unfamiliar text.

Once again, the Army brought a literacy problem to our attention during the recruitment for World War II. They coined the term "functional literacy." An illiterate was "a person who is incapable of understanding the kinds of written instructions that are needed for carrying out basic military functions."

A 5th grade equivalency was also set as its standard and Armed Forces literacy classes developed. The literacy training stopped when the crisis past.

In 1951 Unesco defined a literate as one who can "with understanding, both read and write a simple passage on his everyday life."[3]

In 1962 Unesco expanded its definition to distinguish between a "literate" and a "functionally literate" or one who "has acquired essential knowledge and skills which enable him to engage in activities required in his group."[4] Most governments, however, still use the earlier definition and attach a grade completion equivalency to identify the functionally literate. The history of Literacy Education for the foreign born indicates that the training was concerned with preparation for citizenship. I am sure we all recall Leo Rosten's book HYMAN KAPLAN and poor Mr. Parkhill's struggle with Hyman and his desire to learn English.[5] In one episode of the Adult Education course Mr. Parkhill sends Hyman to the board and asks him to list five words and their opposites. Hyman writes "spic-span, tall-shrimp, North Carolina-South Carolina, and inhale-dead."

Adult Education programs quickly became literacy training in terms of reading and math skills.

Finally, the historical view wouldn't be complete without Marshall McLuhan's definition in 1962 of "media-literacy" which includes film-making, picture-taking, computer-programming, drawing and dancing as acceptable means of expressing intellectual interest and competence.

Today, something called the "minimum competency movement" has swept the United States and now thirty three states have specific standards for graduation--some tests distinguish between school skills and life skills. The May 1978 issue of PHI DELTA KAPPAN asks the question, "Can states legislate literacy?" Articles examine the strengths and weaknesses of competency tests but I couldn't find a definition for literacy. The closest I came to one was a cartoon with the chairman of "The Committee of Education" reading the following report, "It is the opinion of this committee that literacy tests are heavily weighed in favor of those who can read and write."

Senator McGovern recently expressed his concern about the "literacy crisis" in this country and suggested we institute a "national literary program." Unfortunately, the wire services capitalized on his blunder "literary" and not the idea. McGovern, however, is not to be credited as the first to think of a literacy program.

Organized literacy campaigns date back to the eighteenth century when church groups tried to teach people to read the Bible. By the end of the 1960's, 92 countries and nine non-governmental operations had literacy programs for adults who could not read and/or write at all. But when we see the word "literacy" in the headlines what do we mean?

I hope the national government will define literacy for us and see it as a separate skill from the teaching of reading and basic skills to foreign born.

Neil Postman in THE SCHOOL BOOK says, "Literacy is to reading what mathematics is to counting. Learning to name numbers does not ensure that one will understand the process."[6]

He bases much of his argument on the overemphasis of the role of the reading teacher. Reading is often taught as if it were another language, another world. Learning to read isn't terribly difficult or harmful if the ability to "construct around experience and to deal with words and actions is not lost."[7] By the time children enter school they have had five years of relating coherent explanations to the world of experience. Then the reading teacher appears on the scene and could just as easily be teaching Arabic. The child's level of intelligence and success in school often revolves around word frequency counts and graduation to harder primers.

Postman defines a literate person as one who has "a high degree of competence in analyzing linguistic proportions,. in evaluating them and correlating them with reality. Anything less is letteracy."[8]

If schools were teaching literacy as opposed to teaching reading, they would be educating students in the rational uses of languages.

Think of all the problems high schools are having with censorship. School boards get upset about certain "dangerous books." Yet if one is literate as compared to letterate he knows how to distinguish fact from fiction and he knows not to be fooled by what he reads.

Reading specialists argue the values of learning to read. We often hear that reading gives the students a chance to "broaden their horizons" and "open the pleasures of the mind," yet their reading tests do not measure these values; rather they measure comprehension skills and is this our goal of reading instruction?

Well, what is literacy in 1978? I think to begin with we have to see three levels of literacy: as a tool, as an attainment of reading and writing skills and as a practical application of the skills. Each is a necessary part of literacy.

Elizabeth Kennan, Mount Holyoke College President, addressed the issue of literacy in her opening remarks to the College this fall. In the catalog it states that to possess a Mount Holyoke degree one must be literate. She then examines the meanings of literacy:

> Literacy exists in every intellectual activity: it involves both the means that we have to know the truth and the means by which we express it. In mathematics literacy is abstraction, a flame which boils off irrelevant details to reveal and compare the crystalline structure of ideas. Literacy is insight built on collection. When you achieve this literacy, it is like cutting through a honeycomb: the structure of relationships exists around particular cells of experience. Literacy requires that we enter un-self-consciously into an entire vocabulary, of language, of symbols, of events--a shared body of reference which is the sum of our historical experience, our scientific observation and our artistic creation.[9]

What she is saying is that literacy is relative.

The journalism professor shocked by the student's inability to write a coherent lead writes on his paper, "I know you are literate. Show me."

The English literature professor complains in the faculty lounge that his students can not understand Alexander Pope and labels them as "illiterates."

A construction foreman at Willow Island decides not to promote a worker because he cannot give directions. He describes his employee as "illiterate."

The journalism student, the literature major and the laborer know how to read and write but they are not accomplishing what they need to in their chosen working environment.

Let me define literacy then as the ability to use words to accomplish what you need to accomplish in the environment you have chosen for today and the future. To simplify, literacy is the ability to use words to get you where you want to go.

Now we have a working definition--but how do we achieve literacy? What would a true literacy program include?

I would like to see a curriculum designed to teach literacy. Elementary school teachers are now beginning to incorporate into their programs the study of the English language. In Iris Tiedt's new book EXPLORING BOOKS WITH CHILDREN[10] she offers suggestions for a language unit. Her aim is to introduce children to the enjoyment of words and their ways. Some of her suggested books are: Jessica Davidson's IS THAT MOTHER IN THE BOTTLE? (Watts 1972), Charles Ferguson's ABECEDARIAN (Little, Brown 1964), Arthur Alexander's THE MAGIC WORDS (Prentice-Hall 1962), Vasiliu's THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WORD (John Day 1970) and Eve Merriam's A GAGGLE OF GEESE (Knopf 1960).

The first course in the literacy curriculum would be Literacy 101 - the study of the language process. Herbert Kohl in THIRTY SIX CHILDREN[11] illustrates the effectiveness of the study of etymology. He began with one child's use of the word, "psyches" as an insult. The children visualized the word as s-i-k-e-s. He led the class into a discussion of word meanings, Greek myths and word relationships. Elementary school children examined how words acquire their meanings and the notion of "right" and "wrong" in language.

Literacy 202--problem solving and uses of logic. True literacy should extend a man's control over his life and environment and allow him to deal rationally with his life and decisions. The importance of citizenship would naturally follow.

Literacy 303--the study of traditional literature at every grade level. Northrop Frye's theory of literature and the role of the imagination would constitute the backbone of the course.

Frye believes we have three kinds of levels of language, one for each attitude -- the language of ordinary conversation, the language of practical skills and the language of literature. The last level involves the one of the imagination as distinguished from words used for ordinary speech and

conveying of information. We therefore have literacy of language and that of idea. The study of literature is too often thought of as an elegant accomplishment or delicate sauce to keep up one's grammar and one's reading.

If we cultivate our imaginations we can handle words well enough to read and talk and write and to protect us. To educate the imagination we need to include the reading of traditional literature: the myths, the folk tales and fairy tales. Poetry should be at the center of the curriculum.[12] Our imagination doesn't just train the mind, it's a social and moral development as well.

Also, at each level of literacy training writing would be emphasized. Imagine if students 1st grade through college wrote for ten minutes every day during class time. Schools now have SSR programs, Sustained Silent Reading, when students read silently in the classroom. Why not an SSW, Sustained Silent Writing program? We all know the close relationship between writing clearly and thinking clearly. Demanding federal funding for our writing programs is a good beginning.

Let's throw out anthologies for freshman composition and writing courses and use the students' writing as the subject of the course. Remember, our aim in a literacy program is to educate people to use words. We have to examine the kind and amount of work we assign for our writing and reading assignments.

More communication between teachers at all levels would help. Presently there are a few programs where secondary English teachers have college professors grade the high school students' first themes. Some writing labs have developed for high school and college teachers to work together. This is a beginning.

Also, how about more professional workshops where we actually write and not just talk about it?

Fall down the rabbit hole once again with me and listen to what Humpty Dumpty has to say to Alice about words, "When I use a word it means just what I choose it to mean -- neither more nor less. When I make a word do a lot of work, I pay it extra."[13]

Let us begin to pay-attention-to the meaning of literacy in 1978 and ask ourselves as we pull out of the parking lot at the end of the school day -- Did I teach literacy today? Did I help students use words to get them where they want to go?

NOTES

[1]Lewis Carroll, ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND AND THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS (1865; rpt. New York: Airmont Publishing Co., 1965) p. 98.

[2]Lauren and Daniel Resnick, "The Nature of Literacy: An Historical Exploration," HARVARD EDUCATIONAL REVIEW, 47, No. 3 (1977), p. 380.

[3]David Harman, "Illiteracy: An Overview," HARVARD EDUCATIONAL REVIEW, 40, No. 2 (1970), p. 226.

[4]Harman, p. 227.

[5]Leo Rosten, HYMAN KAPLAN (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1937).

[6]Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, THE SCHOOL BOOK (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc. 1973) pp. 83-84.

[7]Postman, p. 84.

[8]Postman, p. 84.

[9]Elizabeth Kennan, NOW (Mount Holyoke Alumni Publication) 78, No. 4 1978), p. 1.

[10]Iris Tiedt, EXPLORING BOOKS WITH CHILDREN (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979) pp. 378-381.

[11]Herbert Kohl, THIRTY SIX CHILDREN (New York: The New American Library, 1967).

[12]Northrop Frye, THE EDUCATED IMAGINATION (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971).

[13]Lewis Carroll, ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND AND THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS, p. 199.

THE MEANING OF THE BASICS

by
David Bergdahl

This summer the voters of California sent their elected officers a message. Although modern in many ways, California still uses the local property tax to pay for welfare. California also boasts a modern assessment system which evaluates the worth of real estate yearly, so the increase in the value of property is felt immediately. These two combined to pass an amendment to the state constitution which limits the tax burden of both individual landowners and corporations, which in fact benefitted utilities and industrial property far more than individuals. What has this to do with "back to the basics"? Simply this: in both cases, in tax reform and schools, the message is the same: do less.

Californians are now learning which tax-supported activities are basic and which are not. Welfare is basic. Education is basic. Police and fire protection are basic, although not necessarily as fully funded as before. But libraries are not, neither is summer school, nor municipal pools or recreation programs for youngsters. This summer the voters of California sent their elected officials a message: do less. But now they are learning the meaning of the basics.

In education we have been hearing about the basics since the economic downturn of the early seventies. But its roots are much deeper than that. Earlier in our history, teachers often were rooted in the communities in which they taught; many were only graduates themselves. They represented the local culture because that was the only culture they knew. Consequently, when parents enjoined their children to listen to the teacher, they were saying listen to me: parent and teacher said the same thing: assimilate to our culture. Nostalgia for this world is partially responsible for a desire to return to the basics. The 1977 Gallup Poll respondants thought so:

> To many respondants it means 'respect for teachers,' 'good manners,' 'politeness,' 'obedience,' 'respect for elders,' 'structured classrooms,' 'back to the old way of teaching.'

Notice how out of place the last two items on the list are: stuck in with all behavioral goals (behavior, incidentally, which is taught at home if at all) are structured classrooms and back to the old ways of teaching. Surely there is a message here: the respondants to the Gallup Poll mentally connect civil behavior with pre-modern life. The unanswered question is whether the old ways of teaching were the cause or the result of respect, good manners, obedience, etc.

One thing is sure, in the old days--I'll be as unspecific as that--student, teacher, parent were united in one culture; there was no generation gap, tax revolt, school shut-downs, no war against the young. After all, the system

worked. Although social criticism increased in the 20's, it only began to threaten the dominant culture after the depression gave witness to the failures of the system. Had it not been for FDR's social activism and the war, war might have broken out at home. The effect of WW II was to drastically shrink the body of the American left to a small group of activists. The American left did not recover after the war, partially because of red-baiting at home and Soviet aggression in Eastern Europe, but predominantly because of the economic upturn. It took another collapse of faith in the system, Vietnam, a war whose proponents could not adequately justify it to recreate the American left. The New Left was composed primarily of students, not intellectuals and workers. After Kent State and the abandonment of the Saigon regime, the left disintergrated. While no longer clamoring at the barricades, however, the young have not rejoined the mainstream. While not political, they do form their own party. Dominant culture and youth culture are disjoint--they touch at few points. Practically the only place they meet is in school.

But schools have changed, too. When sputnik zhapata beeped across the sky in Oct. '57, science, math and engineering asked for and received government subsidies for modernization; the humanities tried to cash in without great success, except for foreign languages, which were deemed in the national interest. The immediate response to criticism such as from Admiral Hyman Rickover was to pour on the homework, but gradually educational research began to pay off in improved curricula and better teaching methods. Summer institutes upgraded teachers' knowledge of their own fields. Gradually education responded to the limelight: seeing ourself in the national interest, responding to the now-available research and professional development funds, teachers became professionalized. Professionalization inserted a new loyalty between teacher and community, a loyalty to the profession. Research studies on the pedagogical value of instructional methods became part of the homework for teachers and many teachers sought advanced degrees, even in states like Ohio which permanently certify teachers with only a B.S.

Sputnik brought in educational reform by introducing new subjects, new methods, and new teachers educated in the post-sputnik atmosphere; another reform came as the result of a Supreme Court decision, the 1956 Brown decision in which the court admitted sociological evidence on the effect of school segregation on education, and in doing so reemphasized the social importance of education. But up to then the schools had been used as tools of socialization; schools had interpreted the dominant culture to the young. Now the schools began to be used to preach American values against American practice. If sputnik professionalized American education, Brown created an educational community with a social conscience. The two sources of reform nicely complement one another: sputnik's influence was felt most strongly in the sciences, Brown's in the humanities. Both contributed to educational research in the effectiveness of teaching, to find the best way possible of educating the young. Jerome S. Bruner seized the teaching profession with his synthesis of ideas current in the early 60's in his book THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION. It is of interest that his concern is with basics. After first differentiating between specific transfer of training (e.g. hammering nails) and nonspecific transfer (the learning of principles and attitudes), Bruner characterizes school-learning as predominantly the second kind.

> In essence, it consists of learning initially not a skill but a general idea which can then be used as a basis for recognizing subsequent problems as special cases of the idea already originally mastered. This type of transfer is at the heart of the educational process--the continual broadening and deepening of knowledge in terms of basic and general ideas.

Bruner cites two problems of curriculum design:

> First, how to have the basic subjects rewritten and their teaching materials revamped in such a way that the pervading and powerful ideas and attitudes relating to them are given a central role; second, how to match the levels of these materials at different grades in school.

These are tasks which occupied the curriculum specialists of the 60's--finding the basics of academic subjects and designing the curricula to proceed from the basics on to higher levels of study. The New Math, the New Biology, Earth Science, even the New English are the results. In the main they have been successful.

At the same time as content-focused curriculum studies have been conducted, research in pedagogy advanced the art of teaching. Now the schools are under attack. They are being asked to repudiate the findings of educational research and return to structured classrooms and the old ways of teaching, to put it in the words of the Gallop Poll. What has happened? Concurrent with the world-wide political activism of the 60's, the youth revolt, schools have modernized, teachers have become professionals, and American society has suffered turmoil. Schools did not create the Vietnam war which victimized our youth; schools did not invent rock culture or drugs, although they tried to understand them; schools did not create racism, although they have fought it in the classroom; schools did not create the generation gap, although they have tried to bridge it. Why then are schools under attack?

The answer might be termed the three S's--Styles, Scores, and Speech. Both students and schools have different styles now, and the new is potentially threatening. The scores of standardized tests have declined between 1963-1977, a period of turmoil in American life, the civil rights struggle, the assassinations of John Kennedy, Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, the Vietnam War, Kent State and Jackson State, Watergate, the Oil Crises and the economic downturn. Finally, much of the talk we hear and much of what we read is debased. Oi For the good ole days of 'respect for teachers' 'good manners' 'politeness' 'obedience' 'respect for elders' 'structured classrooms' 'back to the old ways of teaching'!

Schools have not created the disaffection of American youth. The styles students have chosen for themselves, including their choice of clothing, music & speech, communicate that disaffection with the dominant culture. Why are teachers blamed for the new student styles rather than DJs, permissive parents, or TV? I think because of the new styles of teachers: teachers' rejection of the authoritarian role in favor of a supportive one, choosing to be facilitators rather than disciplinarians. And why have they changed roles? Because

of research into learning. Because teachers have begun to learn why children fail and why they succeed. One item, I think will impress upon you the impact research can give. Andrea A. Lunsford, formerly at OSU, writes in the Feb. 1978 issue of CCC of a pilot program given students in a remedial writing program. There was an experimental group whose progress was measured against two control groups, one of which took Freshman English, one of which did not. "But here's the rub--when we compared the control students who took Freshman English with those who took no English," she writes, "the group who had taken no English performed better than the group who took the regular course." The obvious conclusion is that Freshman English as regularly taught is not innoculous, not ineffectual, but positively damaging. Ms. Lunsford now teaches at the University of British Columbia at Vancouver. In this we may read two lessons: one I have just articulated, that some ways of teaching damage students rather than repair them; the second is that political constituencies resist change. Remember Ibsen's ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE? Dr. Thomas Stockmann, returned home after a long period in the barren north, returns home to the town in which his brother is mayor, and discovers the water supply is polluted. He writes a paper about it to warn the community, and in return is labelled an enemy of the people.

However, the research results are still there to annoy us, like the bacteria in the public baths in Ibsen's play. They will not go away. Like the uncomfortable fact that Ohio coal contains more sulfur than Wyoming coal. A return to the old ways is more a palliative than remedy. The National Council of Teachers of English has been actively supporting teacher-conducted research. If in the 1960s and 70s teachers became student-centered, dedicated to facilitating learning, in the 1980s teachers will conduct their own research, in effect becoming capable of proving the effectiveness of their instruction. If the community or a group within the profession calls for a return to basics, whether style or content, then teachers will be able to justify educational practice. So, in defense of the new styles of teaching and of learning, teachers are willing to be held accountable; however, the profession as a whole is very sceptical of standardized tests which proport to measure proficiency, and reserves the right to participate in the selection and interpretation of tests.

Scores have been the topic of debate whenever education is the issue. Great publicity has been given the downward movement of the SAT-verbal and Sat-math scores, the college boards, a trend which began in 1963. SLATE, volume 2, number 8 analyzes the decline in a three-page discussion which I summarize below. First, the scholastic aptitude test is not a test of knowledge, but rather a predictor of success as a college freshman. Even as that, however, it does not serve its function very well. Overall the SAT-verbal has a predictive ability of .42. A score of 1.0 is absolutely reliable and 0.0 is absolutely unreliable, which amounts to about the same. A good standardized test should have .7 or .8 reliability at the very least. SAT's have this reliability at the upper limits. For instance, if a child receives a 700 or above on the SAT verbal, there is a .9 reliability that he will complete his freshman year. But there are other indicators which function much better for such students such as high school grades. It is in the middle range--and the test is normed so that roughly 2/3 of the students taking the test are scored between 400-600 with 1/6th 200-400 and another 1/6th in the 600-800 range--in the middle range the test fails to satisfy as a predictor. But it <u>is</u> a national test, and admissions directors in schools which limit admissions (unlike, for instance, Ohio's public colleges and universities), use them as a means of interpreting the high school grades and letters of recommendation, etc.

Second, the margin-of-error is quite large, and in itself can account for the change in scores. On the SAT-verbal test a difference of 68 points is "insignificant"--which means that the fact that Ohio-scores are 30 pts higher than the national average of scores, literally says nothing statistically. We are reminded that statistics do not lie, but that people lie with statistics. (The data are from an article with two graphs from OHIO SCHOOLS, the OEA publication.) State Supt. Walter, who is quoted in the article, and the OEA are of course seizing upon "evidence" to justify themselves. Unfortunately, the evidence for and against are equally suspect. Third, the SAT does not test language ability, but rather the skills necessary for proofreading--spelling, grammar and usage and mechanics. It is not concerned with writing--that is a much bigger issue.

All well and good, you say, but why then have the scores declined? The College Board suggests that from 1963-1970 2/3 to 3/4 of the drop can be attributed to widening the scope of the test population, including students who in past years would not have been college bound. However, from 1970-on the scores have continued to drop, and the board could find no single convincing reason. They offer a number of conjectures, the most convincing to me, is that society as a whole favors <u>oral</u> rather than written delivery and that consequently critical reading and careful writing are appraised to be less important than face-to-face interaction. Our children learn what is important by observing our behavior. But this is, after all, only a conjecture. It is undermined by the fact that during the period of the score decline, scores on the English Composition Test have <u>risen</u>. Moreover, in the elementary grades, students have never received better instruction, nor have they read as well. As the King of Siam says in the KING AND I "Is a puzzlement!"

The third and final cause of disaffection with the schools is the speech of our children. Because our speech is formed by those we talk with, and in these generation-gap days children talk mostly with other children, we are assaulted by jargonic, trendy speech. "Will America be the death of English?" asks Edwin Newman. Hopefully, y'know, like I say, well, it's like I said, y'know....Actually, Mr. Newman's target is not our students' jargon, but the language environment they grow up in. "Language is in decline." He writes. "Not only has eloquence departed but simple, direct speech as well, though pomposity and banality have not." A CIVIL TONGUE, Newman's next book, is, like its precessor, a catalog of abuses. But one wishes for an end to the examples of inelegance, pomp, and circumlocution and an analysis of the reasons for such verbal diarrhea. Linguist Robin Lakoff gives an insightful analysis of "hedging," verbal forms used to disconnect speaker from his words, of which <u>y'know</u>, <u>like</u>, <u>I mean</u> are examples.

> Maligned by English teachers and rhetoricians, such forms cling tenaciously to the language, presumably because they serve an essential function. For we should always bear in mind that, if a speech form needs to be enveighed against, it is because it is of wide currency, and this in turn is because there is a deeply felt need for it. It is then pointless to try to eradicate the speech form; at best, an equally noxious substitute will insinuate itself in the place of the ousted form. But usually even this is too much to hope for. Rather, one should try to understand why a particular banality is of such widespread use; and

> perhaps take steps to cure the psychological or social malaise that underlies the linguistic disease. Linguistic inarticulateness very likely always goes along with feelings of social discomfort. If we want to banish <u>like</u> from the lexicon, we will first have to banish defensiveness from the human psyche and power imbalances from real-world interpersonal relationships.[1]

"Hedging," then, is the verbal symbol of a socio-psychological condition. Like most verbal behavior, it reflects the culture of the student. If teachers are to take an interventionist position, then it is up to society--whatever that is--to show that it/we value clear, honest, well-articulated thought. If we do, then all we need to do is to reform ourselves first. If we, ourselves, refuse to allow presidential speech of the kind the White House tapes reveal is used in the highest level of government, as the Watergate Hearings reveal is used by presidential advisors--I'm not talking about profanity, but all the "at this point of time" and "parameters" and the like--then our youth will realize we mean business when we decry the misuse of English. But if we merely decide to "tough it out"--to increase the pressure on our kids by establishing minimum competency tests and behavioral objectives in a performance-based curriculum, to resist social promotion, then schools will have returned to the gate-keeping function of the old days in which schools effectively screened out those of lower socio-economic status. The defense of the profession is best put in the words of one teacher: "We're not going to give up everything we've learned about children, teaching and learning during the past 50 years..."[2]

NOTES

[1]"Language and Society" in A SURVEY OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS, ed. Ronald Wardhaugh and H. Douglas Brown.

[2]PHI DELTA KAPPAN (Vol. 58, 522-533).

BACK TO BASICS: AN HISTORICAL-LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

by
Elliot L. Judd

A "back to basics" movement is sweeping the United States. Educators are constantly accused of having been derelict in their duties to the young because students are unable to demonstrate basic communication skills in the English language. Beyond this is a fear that the entire societal framework of America is endangered. Without the ability to use English, it is argued that the next generation will be unable to function in a rapidly advancing, technologically-oriented society and will fall prey to manipulation by the few who still possess these skills. The alleged danger, of course, is that the "few" can control the majority, who will be helpless to prevent such an occurrence.

The solution called for is a renewed emphasis on basic literacy and communication skills. The follies of the 1960's and 1970's, with the emphasis on electives in areas such as "media studies" and "creative consciousness writing" have been discovered, and the English teachers of the late 1970's must protect the sanctity of the English language and provide guidance to their students, America's next generation of leaders.

I plan to review the history of the role of English and the quality of the language from two perspectives: first, America's language policy from colonial times to the present; second, from two philosophical views of American society as "the melting pot" and "cultural pluralism". Each has as its basis a vision of an ideal America and each views the school system accordingly. The paper will conclude with some comments on how the current "back to basics" movement fits into both America's language policy and into a philosophical view of American society.

Language Policy: An Historical Overview

Since independence, the English language and its role in the United States have been a topic of debate. The fact is that, unlike many countries in the world, the United States has no official language. No mention of English as the official language of the United States can be found in the Constitution, Declaration of Independence or any other government document of the period. For this reason, the historical interpretation of exactly what America's language policy is has often been either ambiguous or contradictory in nature.

As one author points out (Heath 1977a), the Founding Fathers consciously chose to make no mention of the country's language policy. This action was neither an omission nor the result of a belief that such a statement was too obvious to merit mentioning. Rather, the early leaders of the United States

"supported individual choice in language matters and believed that no legal force should either proscribe or perscribe the use of various languages or varieties of English" (Heath 1977a: 233). Such a position has important significance for those who claim historical justification for the imposition of the English language on non-English speakers and/or speakers of various dialects of English. Those claims are unsupported by evidence and only reflects personal beliefs, not history. In fact, they are linguistic "folk notions".

The tolerant attitude exhibited in early America began to shift in the 1850's. From that time and continuing, on and off, until today, many began to insist on the imposition of the English language on non-English speakers either through statutory regulations or informal societal pressures. This process was not a uniform one nor did it apply evenly to all groups. One point is, however, apparent. Pressure for all to adopt English was strongest in times when a real or imagined national calamity emerged; such pressure was applied to groups who were seen as being most threatening to the dominant groups in power (Leibowitz 1971). Stated in another way, when a group was small, demographically divided and prosperity existed in the United States, non-English speakers were allowed linguistic and cultural freedom; however, when the group threatened or was seen to threaten those in power, and when there were economic and political tensions in the country, non-English speakers were expected to abandon their language and adopt English. Examples include the German-Americans during World War I, the Japanese-Americans during World War II, and other immigrant groups during the depression of the 1930's.

Starting also in the 1850's, a trend developed toward a greater emphasis on the teaching of "standard" English and literacy to American children. The reasons given were similar to ones heard today: economic advancement and the political unity of the country (Heath 1977b). These demands were most intense in times of economic and political crises. For instance, during World War I, people were shocked at the large numbers of draftees who failed literacy tests and Congress and the public called on the educational institutions to increase their efforts in the teaching of grammar and reading. Similar measures were called for during the Sputnik period when it was feared that the populace was uneducated and the United States was in danger of losing its economic and political supremacy in the world.

The period between the late 1950's and the early 1970's witnessed a partial abandonment of both the drive toward the imposition of English on non-English speakers, and the call for Standard English as the means to increased literacy. The events of this period support the premise that the political and economic environments affects language policy decisions. The trends toward bilingual education (i.e. linguistic toleration), dialect use in the classroom (i.e. dialect toleration) and electives such as film, free writing etc. (i.e. oral versus written language, informal versus formal English) all occurred at times when the nation was enjoying relative economic prosperity. In addition, the politics of the civil rights movement and its effects on ethnic/linguistic groups in the United States influenced, or forced, more toleration of linguistic diversity in the classroom (Judd 1977).

The recent movement back to "basics" correlates with increased political and economic tensions. Many people feel that there were great excesses in

response to the civil rights movement causing the "majority" to suffer at the expense of the minority. There has been a call for a reduction in needless expenditures and an emphasis on "accountability". The schools in general and English teachers in particular are urged to abandon needless experiments and to "get back to the basics": reading and grammar. Again it is prophesied that failure to do so will cause the country economic and political catastrophes.

Language Philosophies and the American School System

In addition to the historical view already presented, it is also necessary to examine the American school system as it is related to philosophical considerations. It should be noted that such philosophical viewpoints with respect to language policy are idealized statements which do not reflect reality. In fact, existing realities have very little impact on these statements. As long as people believe in a certain position, true or false, they will be influenced by its principles and endeavor to convince others of its existence.

The first, and still the dominant, philosophical position on American society is widely known as the "melting pot." Essentially, the United States is viewed as a unique entity which has been formed by virtue of various groups arriving in this country and becoming Americans. The process means that people conform to American values and customs and most of their native habits are "melted" into the larger amalgam known as America. The end product is a new country, different from any other in the world (See Gordon 1964 for a more detailed description).

In such a view, the schools play a vital role. Schools and teachers are to be the major socializers of diverse groups in order to have these people lose their different cultural attributes and to insure that they "melt", or become Americanized. With specific reference to linguistic behavior, the schools are supposed to maintain the American standard. Non-English speakers must learn English; dialect speakers must learn the standard, accepted form. Failure to do so subverts the entire melting pot philosophy.

The opposite philosophical stance is often referred to as "cultural pluralism". Those who adhere to this view state that the United States is a unique entity consisting of diverse groups with different cultural and linguistic norms and behavior patterns. These groups are not alike, nor should they be; yet, they all function as part of a wider American society. Pressure to have these groups conform to a uniform standard of language and culture would violate freedom of expression and choice, which are basic foundations of the American system. In short, diversity, not uniformity, is the key to success of the United States and the American dream (Again, for more development see Gordon 1964).

In terms of educational policy, those who advocate cultural pluralism perceive the school system in a very different light. The schools should teach English to both dialect and non-English speakers. However, it should also permit these groups to maintain their own linguistic and cultural diversity. Such forms of linguistic maintenance do not weaken the system; on the contrary, according to the pluralists, they strengthen our society by preventing people from becoming alienated. This is accomplished through the

freedom of choice implicit in the maintenance of linguistic and cultural diversity. In other words, tolerance aids democracy rather than hindering it.

Historically, the melting pot philosophy has been the dominant view of most Americans and most educators. Until the late 1950's the schools were viewed as the great socializers for America (Carlson 1975). However, from the late 1950's to the mid 1970's, cultural pluralism began to make great inroads in the school system, especially because of the events in both the civil rights movement and the Johsonian "Great Society" (Judd 1977). As has been previously discussed, one manifestation was in the English classroom where great freedom of linguistic expression was allowed and often encouraged.

Recently, however, we have seen the trend being reversed with the "back to basics" movement. As should be obvious at this point, the back to basics movement is very much part of the melting pot philosophy with its emphasis on strict grammatical teaching and essential literacy demands. It can be reasoned that if the United States is to remain a unified country, then we must all conform to basic linguistic patterns and the freedoms of the past must be erradicated for the common good of all.

Summary and Conclusions

The "back to basics" movement, which is now advocated by many in the United States, is quite a natural phenomenon when viewed historically. By looking at our linguistic history and by understanding the basic philosophies held by many in our society, the new back to basics trend seem to be part of a recurring pattern in American history.

The back to basics movement will no doubt continue for some time to come. Since, for the near future, it appears that a majority of Americans still believe in a melting pot philosophy, and since the economic and political situation in the country does not appear to be improving radically, those who advance basic literacy and only "standard" English in the schools will continue to voice their concerns and insist that the schools do their "rightful" duty.

Those who object to the back to basics movement are in a very difficult position and are apt to be disappointed if they expect an immediate change. Opponents of back to basics may have ample arguments and statistics to support their position and they may claim the school system is not the only institution which affects linguistic behavior; yet, these views, correct as they may be, are unlikely to be given much credence by supporters of back to basics. History has shown that we are dealing with emotional, rather than rational, issues.

Perhaps, in time, we will view the back to basics era as just one short-lived period in America's linguistic history. However, for the time being, it is something that all of us, proponents and opponents, must deal with and that is what makes it crucial that we all understand its philosophical and historical background.

Sources

Carlson, Robert A. 1975. THE QUEST FOR CONFORMITY: AMERICANIZATION THROUGH EDUCATION. New York: John Wiley.

Gordon, Milton M. 1964. ASSIMILATION IN AMERICAN LIFE. New York: Oxford University.

Heath, Shirley Brice. 1977a. "Language and Politics in the United States." In: LINGUISTICS AND ANTHROPOLOGY. Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, 1977. Muriel Saville-Troike, Editor. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University.

_____. 1977b. "Our Language Connection: A Historical Perspective." In: THE LANGUAGE CONNECTION: FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE WORLD. ACTFL Foreign Language Education Series, Volume 9. Skokie, Ill. National Textbook.

Judd, Elliot L. 1977. Factors Affecting the Passage of the Bilingual Education Act of 1967. Unpublished doctorial dissertation, New York University.

Leibowitz, Arnold H. 1971. Educational Policy and Political Acceptance: The Imposition of English as the Language of Instruction in American Schools. Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics.

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION AND THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION

by
Harley L. Sachs

(This is the report of an Experiment at Midwest Technological University Conducted by Professor Harley Sachs, English Department and Adolph S. Gruber, Professor at Large.)

SUMMARY

In response to the national concern for correct English, and faced with an enrollment of students less and less able to express themselves, Professors Sachs and Gruber were awarded an NEF grant of $100,000 to design a program which would make significant changes in ungrammatical behavior at Midwest Technological University. The program rose partly out of a complaint that graduates could not write or express themselves. This was particularly true of engineering students, but the weakness turned up among all majors and even in graduates from the English Literature program.

Using a computer program developed by Prof. Sachs and laboratory carrels modified by Prof. Gruber, approximately two thirds of the freshperson class underwent behavior modification. One third, the control group, received normal instruction in English composition in the usual classes of forty students per T.A., writing not less than two 100 word themes per semester. At the conclusion of the experiment, the behavior mod, or BM group, showed significantly superior grammatical behavior while the control group showed very little progress. Certain aberrations did appear in the BM group and there were several incidents which lead to the subsequent disappearance of Prof. Gruber, but it is felt that these do not in any way affect the statistical significance and reliability of the experiment or its method.

THE PROBLEM

The first report of Mid-Tech graduates being unable to communicate was revealed at a cocktail party attended by a number of visiting job interviewers and Prof. Gruber. Prof. Gruber overheard a peculiar conversation between the personnel manager for Acme Acne, a midwestern cosmetics manufacturer, and one of his employees, a recent graduate in Chemistry and Business Administration from Mid-Tech. When asked a question, the Mid-Tech graduate answered only "true" or "false." Prof. Gruber, curious, entered the conversation and discovered that the ex-student, when pressed for details, was able to reply, "One, two, three, four," or simply, "none of the above." If not given choices he stood mute.

Prof. Gruber's professional concern for language has arisen, perhaps, from the fact that he is German born and was drilled in grammar at an early age. This explains his concern, even though his education is in military history and social sciences with an astrology minor. Nevertheless, he brought the peculiar language patterns of the Mid-Tech graduate to Prof. Sachs's attention and an investigation revealed that the Mid-Tech professors outside the English department had universally adopted a testing and report writing method that required students to do all their homework by filling in, in pencil, the little spaces on machine scorable tests for answers "1,2,3,4 or none of the above."

Aware of the NEF grant program for English improvement, Prof. Sachs and Prof. Gruber immediately set about with a grant proposal. It was funded.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIMENT

Midwest Technological University has a well-equipped language lab which has carrels using cathode ray tubes (GRT's) and light pencils that allow a student to make corrections and revisions to sentences and paragraphs displayed on the screens. A computer program evaluates each answer. If the student is correct, he is permitted to go on to the next problem. If incorrect, he is required to go back to the appropriate early stage and repeat that training before he may proceed. This programmed instruction is standard.

What Professor Gruber designed was a reward system which would motivate the students to do better work. A survey of preferences for rewards among college Freshpersons at Mid-Tech showed that three rewards were preferred. The first was sex, the second marijuana, and the third alcohol. It was easy enough to program the computer to provide color CRT peep shows according to the sexual preference of the student. Upon giving the right answer, the student would be rewarded with a five second segment of a pornographic film which would not continue until the next problem in English grammar was answered correctly. Professor Gruber was unable to obtain a permit to use marijuana and had doubts that the smoke could be confined to each carrel. To blow a puff of smoke in the face of the student with the right answer was easy enough, but some students might have allergies, and the fire extinguishing system in the language lab is smoke activated. This reward was therefore abandoned. An alcohol dispenser was built into eight carrels, providing a shot of beer for each correct answer. On Prof. Sachs' suggestion, the third choice of reward was red hots, small spicy red candies easily dispensed by apparatus borrowed from Skinner boxes in the biology lab. Prof. Sachs prefers red hots to sex or alcohol himself, and admits to falling prey to his own weakness in choosing this third choice of reward, but the results of the experiment prove that this was not an unsuitable choice, even though it did cause an incident late in the second semester of the experiment.

FIRST STAGE OF THE EXPERIMENT

The news of the experiment spread quickly on the Mid-Tech campus and it proved so popular that most of the students in the control group tried to transfer out of their sections and get into the experiment. It became necessary to issue keys and badges to admit only the experimental group to the

special carrels in the language lab. English was never so popular at Mid-Tech as it was during the first semester.

However, there were some flaws. Some students discovered that wrong answers sent them back to earlier questions, but that subsequent answers to easy questions they knew got fresh rewards. One or two were caught deliberately recycling the same low level questions. This error was corrected and edited out of the statistical tables (see APPENDIX).

However, Prof. Gruber was not satisfied with the results. It is well known in the academic world that the most popular teacher is not always the best teacher, and this proved true in the Sachs-Gruber experiment as well. Students seemed to enjoy English, it is true, but they did not do significantly better on the post test than those in the control group. Their performance, while improved, was not statistically significant. This prompted Prof. Gruber's redesign of the carrels for the second stage.

SECOND STAGE OF THE MID-TECH EXPERIMENT

Prof. Gruber, drawing on his German background, decided that success in the experiment depended on a NIETZSCHEN application of the pleasure/pain principle. Each carrel was subsequently modified further so that students who gave the wrong answers would receive mild electric shock. For the second phase of the experiment, then, a student would follow this procedure: He/She would enter the language lab, present ID badge and key, and be permitted to sit in a carrel. For the sake of economy, no carrel had all three rewards built in. Students were obliged to choose between a sex, beer, or candy carrel. An attendant, usually a work-study student, would then attach electrical contacts to the ankles of the subject. If the electrical circuit were broken, the lesson would be discontinued immediately.

The student would type into the computer terminal the appropriate codes and the CRT would turn on with the appropriate lesson depending on how far the student had progressed. A short review period without reward or punishment preceeded the continuation of the lesson. If the student answered the questions correctly, he/she was rewarded. If the answers were wrong, he/she would not only have to go back to an earlier stage, but would receive a mild electric shock.

It was at this point that a lack of communication between Prof. Sachs and Prof. Gruber developed. Prof. Sachs has certain well-known pet peeves. Students who spell "writing" with two t's, or think "a lot" is one word regularly receive failing marks. Comma splices and errors in agreement have caused many English professors dispepsia and, if allowed to continue for long periods, even peptic ulcers. These errors caused hypersensitive Prof. Sachs to program the computer for severity: multiple shocks. What he did not know was the Prof. Gruber had begun to exhibit certain tendencies which might be regarded as sadistic. He increased the voltage of the punishment program, making the punishments sequentially more severe by the square of the voltage.

At about this time certain unanticipated side effects occurred. A student who had selected red hots as his reward became addicted to them. Because Prof. Sachs had purchased all the locally available red hots for use in the experiment

(and for his own consumption), the addicted student could obtain them only by giving right answers in English. He completed his lessons in the language lab ahead of schedule only to find himself addicted and unable to satisfy his craving. He was found in Prof. Sachs' office unconscious, having broken in, burglarized the filing cabinet where the candy was kept, and having taken an overdose. He was hospitalized, put on a withdrawal program, but was forced to quit school.

Several male students who had mistakenly punched in the wrong codes (Prof. Sachs insists it was deliberate) on the sex track became abnormally fascinated with the pornography segments designed for coeds. By the time they had completed their English behavior modification course they had been modified into trans-sexuals, causing a furor in the athletic program, as one of the students was the star center on the hockey team and refused to use the men's locker room. Parents and fans complained and the center's fiancee filed a law suit against Mid-Tech for alienation of affection.

Other students who successfully completed the English language BM course became alcoholics, a malady fairly common on the campus, but nevertheless undesirable.

The worst side effect and the one that caused the abrupt cancellation of the experiment was the electrocution of two students whose ACT scores in English should have warned Prof. Sachs that they were bound to commit numerous comma splices, errors in agreement, and to spell writing with two t's. Prof. Gruber's progressively severe punishments proved too much for their constitutions. It was an unfortunate combination.

Before Prof. Gruber could be detained for questioning, he disappeared. It was learned that he had drawn $75,000 from the experiment's NEF account and is believed to have fled to Argentina where he is known to have relatives. He is still at large.*

Prof. Sachs was left to complete the findings on his own and to prepare this report. He disclaims all responsibility for the deaths of the two students and can prove statistically that, in a sample of 750 students, the deaths of two are not significant. The transexual conversions, alcoholism, and addiction to red hots he finds regrettable, but "just one of those minor things that go wrong. They can be designed out of the next phase of the experiment. I'm applying for another grant."

CONCLUSIONS

The combined use of pleasure/pain, reward/punishment in the language lab has a great future, if applied with caution. The experience at Mid-Tech shows that students can be taught answers other than true-false or one, two, three, four, or none of the above. They can be taught to recognize and correct errors

*Prof. Gruber took the data with him, (hence) no APPENDIX. (Sorry).

in grammar and spelling and can even be taught the correct use of semicolons. With care, some may learn that "a lot" is not one word. Behavior modification allows students to progress at their own pace, to choose their own rewards, and to learn. Additional programs may teach them how to write essay answers, themes, and even technical reports. The future is bright for the professor who is willing to do a little experimenting.

FURTHER RESEARCH

The Mid-Tech experiment suggests further analysis, including the long term effectiveness of the rewards. How many correct responses in a single session are optimal; when does the number of shots of beer impair behavior? how long do subjects retain interest in porno flicks? do red hots in large quantities cause cancer? how much electric shock is enough? too much? Grant proposals on these subjects may be expected, and one of them may well earn the Proxmire "Golden Fleece" award.

BACK TO BASICS AND COLLEGE ENGLISH: DEVELOPING PRACTICAL LITERACY

by
Susan I. Schultz

America was shocked to discover, at least according to NEWSWEEK, in the early 70's, that Johnny could neither read nor write. Amidst the hue and cry which followed this discovery, Johnny grew up and graduated (somehow) from high school. Although he had some trouble filling out his application form, he enrolled at State University under the open admissions policy and, in four years, graduated with a B.S. in Engineering. Johnny was able to find a job, but, when the time came for him to file his first report, his boss found that Johnny still couldn't write.

Composition teachers find themselves swept into the forefront of the back-to-basics movement because the skill they have to teach is basic to a person's survival in the "real world." Writing intelligible English is essential to anything a person will do in later life, from writing reports on the job to letters of application, from composing letters to the editor to notes complaining to the telephone company about an overcharge on the latest bill.

The first response to the cry of "back to basics" was the proliferation of remedial or developmental courses in colleges from Maine to California. The student in the typical developmental course is taught to write well-formed English sentences and to develop coherent and unified paragraphs. In addition, if there is time, the student is expected to be able to write a short expository essay in acceptable English classroom style. What then? Until recently, it could be that the student finished the course and never took another writing course in his/her life; eventually, he/she went back to writing almost as badly as before. After all, a quarter or semester of instruction can hardly make up for all those years of bad writing.

Now, however, more schools are waking to the second part of the battle-wave--the mandatory English requirement. Cast into the corner during the rebellions of the 1960's, the requirement has returned, but we must make sure that it is sufficient to do the trick. Reviving an old practice does not necessarily mean that it will work under present conditions. (One of the misapprehensions of the back-to-basics movement has been that we must return to the way our parents or grandparents were taught; if we followed that notion to its (il)logical extreme, we could eventually go back to horse-drawn carriages and blood-letting.)

First, students must be pre-tested for placement, and the tests must be graded by experienced teachers, preferably those with experience in both developmental and "regular" composition. A student should receive a recommendation to take a developmental course or a "regular" freshman-level composition course;

students may be waived from taking either of these courses, but standards for waiving should be high. (Ohio University's current practice of having three readers per placement test seems to be an adequate measure against idiosyncratic grading.) If a student must take the developmental course, he/she should also be required to take the freshman-level course. After all, a student graduating from college is expected to have a level of skill beyond the minimum required for college entrance.

Given a composition requirement and an adequate means of placing incoming students, we must then make sure that our composition courses are preparing students for life outside the English classroom. The majority of students in composition courses are not English majors, and we must recognize that fact if we are to effectively serve the needs of the students and the college. This does not mean that we should do away with literature courses on the freshman level. It does mean that departments must insure that freshman composition courses emphasize general composition skills rather than the analysis of literature. In addition, we must work towards developing our students' practical literacy, that is, the ability to use the forms of writing they will be using in their work at college and after graduation. The freshman composition course should concentrate on explaining strategies for writing basically analytical, expository prose, prose which is reader-based rather than writer-based, which exists not for the purpose of self-expression but for transmitting information. I have had success with this approach to composition; students who felt that they couldn't write "English papers" were able to concentrate on their own areas of interest and to develop sound writing skills.

The first part of the course covers basics: developing mature sentence style through both complexity and variety; working with pre-writing considerations, such as audience analysis, subject limitation, basic organizational patterns (general to specific, question to answer, etc.), and outlining; writing thesis and topic sentences; understanding unity and coherence. This material is covered through lecture/discussion, in-class exercises, and take-home assignments which take the place of quizzes. The second part of the course concentrates on learning various rhetorical strategies. This material is covered by lecture/discussion along with workshops to discuss student essays. For each type of essay covered, we talk about the purpose of the essay type, what the topic sentence should include, and the method(s) of organizing the material. The types of material discussed are chosen to develop students' practical literacy: comparison/contrast, classification/analysis, argumentation/persuasion, definition, process (instructions and operational analyses), summaries, formal letters (format, letters of application, complaint, and request). Depending on the length of the course, these writing assignments can be supplemented by discussions of reports of research findings, laboratory reports, accident reports, etc. Focusing discussion on these types of writing assignments and focusing on reader-based writing helps students become aware that writing is something that serves a purpose, not something merely to be endured in a classroom.

This approach has the additional advantage of flexibility. It can be done through more traditional lecture/discussion; it can also work with a more individualized, tutorial approach, particularly with a clearly written textbook which is based on a more practical approach (PLAIN ENGLISH PLEASE by Cowan and McPherson is particularly suitable). Whether the material is taught

through lectures or from a textbook, a teacher can adapt this approach so that most class-time is spent on discussing drafts/revisions and on workshops. Moreover, room for more "self-expressive" writing can be made through the use of journals. Topics for journal writing can be assigned (perhaps a series of values-clarification types of assignments can be given as choices) or topics can be left open to the student. Last, the instructor's desire to discuss "literature" can be satisfied by using favorite pieces of literature as examples. For example, "A Modest Proposal" works well in a discussion of argumentation and logic. Thus, this type of approach allows for flexibility, but, most important, it trains students in the type of writing they will use outside the English classroom.

However, developing a strong freshman composition course is not enough. One course taken in the freshman year does not give students enough writing practice. Students should receive advanced training in order to refine and apply their writing skills to the types of projects they will have in their given professions. The increased demand for technical writing courses and seminars indicates the need to prepare students to communicate effectively. This demand also indicates an increased awareness by executives, engineers, and scientists that effective writing is extremely important in the face of today's communication explosion. Thus, students should be required to take freshman composition (or test out of it) and also an upper-level course designed to apply writing to their chosen fields. Some educators have proposed that a senior-level writing course be substituted for freshman composition.[1] Putting off composition until the senior year is impractical. If a student waits until his last year to take a writing course, he is likely to forget whatever composition skills he learned in high school. Moreover, the student may go on writing poorly organized, poorly supported, and poorly worded papers for three years--woe to the instructors who must read his papers--and become entrenched in this style. A dual requirement--both freshman-level and upper-level courses --is the best way to insure that students learn to write effectively.

All of the above means that English departments must provide strong teacher training, not only for undergraduate majors but also for graduate students, who, in many universities, teach the majority of freshman-level courses. There is a growing number of students who wish to major in rhetoric/composition theory and in technical writing. English departments must be prepared to provide students with courses not only in literature and creative writing but also in composition. They must make sure that their graduates have a strong working knowledge of basic grammar and mechanics and, most important, that their graduates can write clearly and precisely. The charge to the English teacher and the English department is thus two-fold--to improve freshman composition courses and to develop effective advanced writing courses so that students may develop practical literacy. The real world outside the ivory towers awaits.

NOTES

[1]W. Earl Britton, "The Trouble With Technical Writing Is Freshman Composition," JOURNAL OF TECHNICAL WRITING AND COMMUNICATION, 4 (Spring 1974), 127-31.

Thomas M. Sawyer, "First Things Last: Composition for Seniors, Not Freshmen," JOURNAL OF TECHNICAL WRITING AND COMMUNICATION, 1 (April 1971), 139-46.

Both essays are reprinted in THE TEACHING OF TECHNICAL WRITING, Donald H. Cunningham and Herman A. Estrin, eds. NCTE, 1975.

REAL BASICS: BRINGING LEARNERS AND LANGUAGE TOGETHER THROUGH LITERATURE

by
June Berkley

> "The best teacher is not life, but the crystallized and distilled experience of the most sensitive, reflective, and most observant of our human beings, and this experience you will find preserved in our great books and nowhere else."

Nathan M. Pusey's conclusion is an agreeable one; those who love literature cling to it as an admonition when overtaken by conscience or curriculum demands to leave the classics for awhile and "teach some grammar and composition."

We leave literature reluctantly and turn to what we call "a related area," bridging what we preceive as a gap--with clever assignments "growing out of the literature." In so doing we have deceived not only our students but ourselves: the literature is the language; the composing process is in the text. By compartmentalizing our own curriculum we have denied ourselves and our students access to the most basic composition texts: the literature itself. And in the process we have isolated the imaginative experience, exiled it under the heading of Classics and perverted or stunted the language growth of more human beings than we dare consider.

Indeed, charges David Daiches, we teach literature and language in such a way that the classics play no part in the cultural experience of the majority of the American population. As for language, Daiches reluctantly adds, even his most brilliant American students as a rule write fuzzy prose sprinkled with "something like the approximately right words."

Given the colossal effort English teachers put into the classroom experiences of millions of students each day, unfortunate seems to be not even an "approximately" good word to describe the status quo. We do not need a visiting British scholar to tell us that the majority of our students will never share our love affair with the written word. We bemoan the current affinity for the waste land of the electronic media and the popular press.

Given an ideal situation, which he described in an address before an NCTE Convention in the 60's, Daiches would remedy this perversion of art by teaching literature at quite an early age with a large element of informality accompanying the provision of necessary knowledge; that is, he would not start late with a literary work and break it down, but early in the lives of children with an experience, a recognition of how we feel and think, and then build up a literary work--however elementary a kind, introducing quite informally the question of quality or critical judgment. He would experiment with modes and styles by seeing what happens to an incident when it is expressed first this way, then that.

His utopian teacher would introduce pupils to literature actively, not passively, leading them to make it on the spot out of the materials of their own experience and in the process develop a sensitivity to language and form and bring in the question of values and standards. They would find out what literature is and form literary judgments by joining in the making of literature. Art must be experienced to be understood.

If literature is to be an illumination of experience rather than a body of knowledge, then the teacher is obliged to construct methodology that will bring about engagement with literature.

Daiches suggests that the first literature the student studies must make contact with his own experience. It need not be great, though it should be good and it should be immediately accessible, not so complicated that the student can't make immediate contact. One wants a work with a surface that makes contact possible: Dickinson and Frost rather than Wordsworth's lyrical ballads because there is enough on the surface to attract beginners. A first reading of "Birches" will have enough obvious magic to entice a fourteen-year-old.

This first encounter, which can be called initial recognition, must be followed rapidly by an appreciation of craftsmanship. As soon as possible the student must be led to look at the way this disposition of language, this choice of words, this handling of rhythm and rhyme achieves the particular illumination, the area of suggestiveness that he has been led to find in the poem. Let the youngsters, Daiches concludes, learn to appreciate something well made in words as well as in other materials.

The making of something in language, composition, can be linked to literature if the teacher treats the notion of craftsmanship as a bridge between the process and the product. If teachers and students don't think of authors as operating remotely out there, but consider instead "Does this sound right?" and "How would you put it?"--even of the most exalted works of literature, students will come to some honest standards of excellence.

A colleague, working between DAVID COPPERFIELD and student autobiographies in the eighth grade, was able to move between "I Am Born" and "I Fall Into Disgrace" and the students' own experiences to generate passages such as "My grandfather died just as he lifted the clothespin latch on the henhouse door." and "When they finally brought baby Marianne home from the hospital, I was sure she was dead because her eyes stayed closed all night. I cried and cried, but I saw in the morning that she had only been sleeping." Conscious rearrangement of words in these sentences helped students appreciate the art of literature.

The British system of early and constant writing appears to have yielded better results than has our own inclination to ply elementary students with workbook exercises and practice sheets on what many would call "the basics." If we defined "the basics" as the British do, we would have youngsters compiling notebooks of their own writings--with liberal sections of favorite passages copied from the masters. If the experience of one Hays Fulbright exchange

teacher, reported recently in an education journal, is a fair sample of the results of the British system, we would do well to look more closely at the practice of student writing as a basic: she reported that she found so little to correct in her upper level composition classes that she felt obliged to ask her headmaster what she should do about marking. He replied that she should criticize for style!

But the secret of this ease of writing lies not only in the early and constant practice of writing, it lies in the simultaneous and integrated practice of reading the classics as something made through language. Any student who constantly looks at the way language works in literature, who continually inquires--through his own composition efforts--into the expressive potential of language will develop proficiency in a basic skill too little known in this country: the ability to call up and marshall his thoughts in effective language.

By continually generating expressive and informative language, by measuring its effectiveness through his own sensibility, the student knows literature intimately; no amount of dissection and reading of critical reviews will bring the student to this awareness. The approach, of course, predicates leadership by teachers who write, who have themselves survived the classroom assault on the great books, who have somehow gone through or around the reigning predilection to examine but rarely to create. Such leadership is rare.

A majority of teachers presently being educated for the profession cannot and will not approach their subject through this utopian method. And they will inherit students already stunted or warped by unhappy language experience. "I hope we don't have nouns and prouns again," wrote an apprehensive eighth grader on a "get acquainted" sheet the first day of class. "Since fifth grade we've had to circle nouns and prouns."

Since beginning teachers rely heavily on "tapes" of their own elementary and high school experience, they are likely to consider the current cry for more language study to be a cry for more identification of "nouns and prouns." A different definition of basic skills is needed. Basic means understanding how language works. Through first-hand experience--and not through memorizing someone else's lists and litany--will come an intimate association with words. Basic means selecting and arranging words. Through energetic excursions into well written (and appropriately selected) works of literature, students will learn how this choice, this ordering works or doesn't work.

This method of bringing literature and children and language together cannot be dismissed as "something to do with upper-level students." Students with a spontaneous native bent for literature really don't need a teacher to do much more than introduce them to a variety of great literature. Students with high native intelligence but limited or unfortunate language experience, as well as those not obviously endowed with intellect or literary sensitivity, need teachers who consciously arrange literary encounters to encourage language growth. If we are to deal intelligently with all students and make the literary tradition into which they have been born have any meaning for them, we must revise the philosophical base upon which we have for too long built our instruction.

TEACHING REAL ENGLISH IN THE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

by
William L. Smith

"Vocational English" has, unfortunately, a bad reputation. It is considered a course for students who can't read the good literature and can't write the good prose. Even if this is a true statement about our students' abilities (I would dispute this "truth"), it does not necessarily follow that we cannot give our students a good background in English, particularly in the English language. What it does mean is that we perhaps have to use a different approach and expect different, but not less desirable, ends.

Vocational students, like all students, need to be prepared, through their schooling, to function effectively in society. The question, obviously, is, what does "function effectively" mean. I would contend that literacy is important for everyone. Yet a realistic appraisal indicates that most of what we read is written at about the sixth or seventh grade level. Newspapers, magazines, many popular books, directions, and applications are written at or below this level. Furthermore, most of what we normally write--personal letters, letters to editors or for information or grievance--is also at or below the seventh grade level. We do not normally write the sophisticated essays necessary for college courses, and very few of us write technical reports.

Consequently, what vocational students need is to learn how the language is used to manipulate the thoughts of the reader so that they might have the power to counter that manipulation.

There is also, I believe, a need for education to help improve the lot commonly called "the human condition." I see nothing wrong in trying to help students create, in the future, a better society. No one denies that the existing society could use some improvement. English courses can do this by showing students how language is used to create stereotypes as well as to inform or even deceive.

Most of our students' future interactions will not be in writing, but will be through speech--TV, radio, political speeches, and dialogue with employers, employees, and peers.

Consequently, I believe that we should focus our attention and the attention of our students on how the English language is used in real-life situations in order to show students varieties of language and how people respond to these varieties.

As a beginning point, the students could listen to a recording of some of the dialects of American English. NCTE has published a record called

"Americans Speaking" on which six distinct dialects are presented. This is an effective beginning for learning not just that people from various parts of the country speak differently--most students know that--but how and why they speak differently. It is important for students to know that everyone speaks a dialect and that some of these dialects are considered more prestigious.

It is clearly not enough to say "talk right and you will be hired." You have to show why people respond negatively or positively to various speech patterns. The students do this themselves--as their reactions to the voices on the record will indicate. Consequently, the teacher can use this built-in ability to help the students build an understanding of why they reacted as they did.

Once the students have learned, by using the record, to identify specific differences and thus become attuned to varied speech, they can become field investigators themselves. They can interview people in their community from various professions and jobs. These data can then be used to investigate, with the teachers' help, how they feel about the various speech patterns they collected: Who do they regard as "better", "more educated", "more successful" and which speakers do they consider less educated and successful. A pattern will quickly emerge, and they will begin to provide reasons for their judgements.

There is ample research evidence to show that all people, regardless of background or education, create roughly the same stereotypes when listening to dialects. Therefore, it may be assumed that students in any class will evidence these same stereotypes. Once they confront their own stereotypes, and at least somewhat objectively analyze them, they will have the necessary knowledge required for changing their own speech.

One of the typical stereotypes of vocational students is that they "understand the real world". Certainly they understand the concept of power. By creating an induced understanding of how language can be used to increase power, of how the people they consider powerful really talk, they will be more able and more apt to make adjustments in their own language.

Vocational students, typically, have been provided with eight years of admonitions on what is correct usage. However, most of these corrections of their language have been focussed on writing and only incidentally on speech. When corrections have been made in speech, they have been presented absolutely and abstractly as the way the "best" people talk. Yet these "best" people are neither necessarily nor probably the models these students hear at home, in the community, as peers, or even as the people they admire. Consequently, all that the teacher says is obviated by everything the students know from "real life". Teachers must, therefore, not be of that real world, and thus can easily be discounted as unnecessary and unreal exceptions. Because students, like adults, do not wish to be different--they earnestly desire to be part of the norm--the teacher's model is not seen as desirable.

By allowing, indeed forcing, students to collect information on speech from their own world, they move away from the texts. Yet I have consistently

found that the data the students collect provides essentially the same information that the texts present. The only differences are such changing usages as "who/whom", the subjunctive "were" (If I were you, I wouldn't go.), "shall/will", and perhaps a couple of others. Yet in truth, most speakers of modern English do say "Who did you see?", "If he was there, I would have seen him.", and certainly do not use "shall" very often.

A systematic introduction into how language is used in real conversations, using pre-recorded evidence such as the NCTE record or conversations recorded by the students themselves, will provide our students with undeniable evidence that we all can and do stereotype others and that the speaker who knows this fact can exert control over the listener's attitude. My experience with this lesson has also consistently shown that the students learn that humans use speech primarily as a means to convey information but that the listeners use that speech to also make judgements about the speaker. The students always say, after the unit, that we shouldn't make such judgements, but they know they do. Consequently, they are confronted with a dilemma which they resolve by becoming more tolerant of others' speech. Certainly tolerance is a desirable goal of education, and students can learn to use their language as a tool of power, one which allows them to manipulate the perceptions of others. That most certainly is a highly desired goal of education, for it is the basic ingredient in "effective functioning in society".

ABC'S FOR SECRETARIAL STUDENTS

by
Marilyn Carr

Writing an article for an English publication is the last thing I ever expected to do. I have always said, "I wouldn't be an English teacher, even if I were paid a million dollars a year." However, as a business teacher preparing senior girls for office work, I have become an English teacher in a limited way and would like to describe the kind of teaching experience I have.

The secretary in the business office needs good English skills. Her employer probably cannot spell. He probably depends upon his secretary for punctuation and for minor improvements in sentence structure. He will compose a good letter, in most cases, but the secretary will have to be skilled in translating shorthand, words on a machine transcriber, or handwritten copy into that beautiful mailable letter the employer treasures so much. In short, the secretary must be perfect in spelling, punctuating, and "making her boss look good."

The students who come into my class, however, are almost completely non-functional in these skills. When I distribute the English textbook at the beginning of the year I hear groans, "Oh, no, not an English book!" Just the sight of the textbook is nearly enough to drive them from the classroom before the year begins. My students have received no better than "C" grades in English. Some students can read at about fifth grade level; others are poorer. Most of my students are not disruptive or uncooperative or behavior problems, but with this negative attitude toward English and with average or below average ability, I have to do something to improve their attitude toward English. What can I do to help these students become functional in spelling and punctuation?

My first task is to convince the student that we will cover only the essentials of the English textbook. I assure them that we will cover punctuation very thoroughly since this is so very essential in machine transcription. (My particular students do not study shorthand.) I assure them that I will make the English instruction as <u>practical</u> as possible.

This word "practical" is very important, for if the student can see the reason for what they are learning, they will at least try to learn. To them, the word "transitive verb," for example, is a complete turn off. If I used this word in my instruction I would lose that student for the rest of that period and possibly for the rest of the year. They see no reason whatsoever for learning such a term. It has caused them nothing but grief in the past, and they expect it to cause nothing but grief in the future. Therefore, I

avoid all these kinds of words that English teachers have been using for generations. I forget about tenses of verbs or "sit" and "set" or adverbs or any other meaningless words like these. I do refer to subjects and verbs and occasionally adjectives and prepositions.

What do students recognize as being practical? I begin with a study of the spelling and locations of our fifty states. Since most students miss more than half of these on my pretest, they immediately recognize this as a practical place to begin. We proceed with learning to spell the 500 most misspelled words in business letters. This is a list compiled from a study of several thousand business letters and consists of very common, everyday words. In our grammar study we begin with the identification of subjects and verbs. We progress to phrases and clauses (I don't care what kind of clause it is), and the basic uses of commas. I limit punctuation study to the most common uses only.

An entire semester will be spent on the study of commas. We progress very slowly, and repeat and repeat and repeat. If I am lucky, by mid-term the students have begun to get the idea of how commas are used. I try not to get discouraged.

We have English competitions, matching one side of the room against the other. We have spell downs. We try to stump the other team by making up a sentence they cannot punctuate. We play state abbreviation bingo. We play "catch the mistake in the teacher's grammar," and the students are delighted if they can point out my mistake. (I'm delighted, too.) My instruction resembles the elementary teacher's classroom. My goal is making the students functional in spelling and punctuation, so anything that will help achieve this goal is tried. I even "threaten" the students that if they write "Thanks alot for the wedding present," on their thank-you note to me, I will take their present back. I haven't had to take back a present yet.

What is the result of this kind of instruction? First, the teacher is constantly preparing new material for the class to use. Since only 70 pages of the textbook are covered, hundreds of hours of drills and practice work must be prepared in addition to the textbook. Second, the class at least tolerates English. I won't say they love it, but I will claim that students like English better than they thought they did and are more functional than they thought they could be. Third, the class is beginning to be alert to mistakes. When we attend an assembly program, my students will point out the spelling errors in the printed program. They become more aware of errors made by teachers and others. They have developed a questioning mind that a good proofreader needs.

Fourth, and most important, they have an improved attitude. They are willing to try instead of giving up in despair. They don't love the English book, but it is not their enemy either. They have managed to survive an entire year of English and feel a little hopeful that maybe they have learned something.

At the end of the school year, my students are not as good in English as your "A" students. They would probably receive no better than a "C" grade in your class. They are not competent in the use of the machine transcriber. They still have an atrocious oral vocabulary, saying "It don't matter," or "I don't want nothing." They still make mistakes in writing. However, they are ready to spell all the words correctly on an application blank. They are ready to proofread their own typing and "see" spelling and punctuation mistakes. They do feel more confident that the comma really does belong there.

I dream about that perfect school where students would not learn to hate English or percents or science or other essentials of our world. I don't know how that perfect school is achieved, but I know that it begins by teaching the student--not the subject. It begins by making whatever adjustments are necessary in curriculum to reach the student at his level of understanding. It begins by caring.

HERE COMES THE INTEGRITY KID
OR
HOW TO HELP CHILDREN DEVELOP LANGUAGE POWER BY BRINGING WORDS TO LIFE

by
Patricia I. Mahieu
and
Susan Van Camp

The excitement of a first ride on a San Francisco streetcar would soon fade if you had to study streetcar wheels or paint types used on streetcars in order to prepare for the ride. Instead you would want to be immersed in the experience of riding a streetcar. You would want to hear the rousing clang of its bell, feel the surge of the car on steep hills, and be among the jostling people hurrying to their destinations. How quickly, too, a beginning reader's excitement fades when, in order to read, she discovers she has to study the sounds of individual letters or learn a list of words before she can experience reading a story. It would be like a Big Mac without the hamburger.

As they acquire power in communication, children have as rich a language resource as the experiences they have in which they use language. Perhaps the experience of riding the streetcar will stimulate the child to explore streetcar wheels and paint. In any event, she has a context to which she can relate that exploration, having ridden the streetcar. Acquiring communication power within the classroom should occur in the same way ---- within the context of whole experience from which specific aspects may then be selected for focus based on a child's interest and need to know.

Providing experiences in the classroom or capitalizing on the experiences children bring to the classroom can provide a meaningful linguistic environment conducive to language learning. According to Roach Van Allen, "The basic question is not whether we teach listening, speaking, writing, and reading but whether we deal directly or indirectly with communication experiences. These experiences must be ones that make a difference in an individual's ability to communicate ideas and feelings and to be influenced by the ideas, the language, and the feelings of others." (Allen, 1976)

Over the years research has provided support for an experience-based approach in helping children develop language power. These have generally taken the form of comparing an experience-based approach (language experience) with the basal reader approach and were usually related to reading instruction. In most of these studies the language experience approach included a more integrated involvement with various aspects of communication ---- oral composition, writing, and reading. The language used emerged from either direct classroom experiences or experiences brought to the classroom by children. Some positive results were identified and are useful for classroom teachers to know.

Improved children's attitudes towards themselves and reading were cited by several studies. (Cohen, 1976; Barnette, 1972; Mc C. Gallagher, 1975; Allen, 1962) Other language/reading benefits accruing from an integrated language experience program when compared with controlled vocabulary basal reader programs were: greater oral reading proficiency (Stauffer, 1970); more words spelled correctly (Stauffer, 1970; Duquette, 1972); more complex and syntactically mature sentence patterns used with a greater command of writing mechanics. (Stauffer, 1970; Garman, 1978; Duquette, 1972; Cohen, 1976). When comparing acquired vocabulary use in language experience programs to that in basal reader programs researchers found that the amount and rate of words acquired compared favorably (Henderson, 1971-1972) or exceeded that in basal programs. (Dzama, 1975; Mc C. Gallagher, 1975; Stauffer, 1970; Garman, 1978) In addition the word holdings of children in language experience programs were richer in orthographic information than those in controlled vocabulary programs (Henderson, 1971-1972), thus providing children with more opportunity to generalize about language components. In related studies a significant positive relationship was found between children's comprehension and the frequency of oral language structures common to the children contained in the materials they read. (Ruddell, 1965; Strickland, 1962)

These studies support the following suggested practices for classroom teachers in helping children develop language power:

1. Provide new experiences that allow children new and varied language uses.
2. When children meet new experiences which involve new words let children integrate the new words within their own language structures.
3. Provide opportunities for new language uses based on children's 'old' experiences.

Following is a detailed description of seven classroom experiences which can help children develop language power through direct classroom experience. Each of the activities described provides an experience to which the children respond using some form of their own language while at the same time expanding it. These classroom experiences were developed by Susan Van Camp when she was a student at Ohio State University, Newark, Ohio. Her ideas were based on one developed by Albert Callum (Callum, 1967). Her description of the experiences follows:

Thursday had finally arrived! Mrs. Coleman's second-grade class waited patiently for the visitor to appear. Suddenly, a knock is heard at the door. Everyone is startled when they look up from their work to see a giant, human tulip standing in the doorway. The children immediately stop whatever they are doing and stare in amazement. All attention is focused on this strange, but interesting visitor as the giant tulip enters the classroom and begins to tell the story of how and why she has come to visit them.

"I have come from a distant planet called 'Sniff'. Everything on my planet has a fragrance. I have here a basket with several small containers in it. Each container holds a friend, also from the Planet Sniff, who has his own distinct fragrance. Come, sniff each of my special friends, as I tell

you the story of my very best fragrant friend. Once, a short time ago, a farmer on the Planet Sniff dug my fragrant friend out of the garden and put him in a rocket that landed on the earth. In fact, the rocket landed in Newark, Ohio at McDonald's. He was put in a Big Mac and sold to me. I saved him from being eaten alive by placing him in this small container. By now, you have guessed who my special friend is ---- an opinion! I have some other fragrant friends with me today who are also from the Planet Sniff. I'm going to give each group of five one of my friends. Without opening the container, decide among yourselves what you think the frangrance is and write a story about my friend. Tell how he got here and where he might end up some day."

As the children work together to create their stories, the giant tulip wanders from group to group using the term fragrance as often as possible. When all stories are completed, each group presents their story to the rest of the children while their fragrance is passed around the room for all to sniff. After each story is shared, all of the children guess as to what they think the fragrance is. After all guesses are exhausted, the container is opened and the true identity of the fragrance is revealed. Soon after, the giant tulip gathers up all of her fragrant friends and says "goodby" to the children.

One might think it a bit odd to find a giant, human tulip in a classroom but the children in Mrs. Coleman's room waited eagerly for Thursday mornings when this and several other curious visitors came to see them. These visitors captured the attention of the children unlike any other method of presentation I have used. During my participation in this classroom, I decided to capitalize on this observation by disguising myself as a visitor each week for seven weeks.

Each Tuesday morning during that seven-week interval, I printed a new word on a piece of paper and taped it to the classroom door. Then on Thursday morning a visitor would arrive and incorporate that word into the lesson. I chose words that would become meaningful to the children as each lesson progressed although the words themselves may have been beyond the scope of a typical second-grade child. The seven words I chose to present in each weekly lesson were apparition, fragrance, magnify, gravity, buccaneer, advertisement, and integrity.

My first lesson evolved around the word apparition. I disguised myself as an apparition, or ghost, and floated around the room for several minutes explaining, in ghost talk of course, that I was an apparition (Callum, 1967). This simple, but direct portrayal of an apparition served as an introduction to the series of lessons that were to follow. To my delighted surprise, the word 'ghost' was seldom used in that classroom again.

You are already quite familiar with my second lesson which was taught by a giant tulip. The children were enthusiastic and cooperative in their efforts to create a story that would reveal their fragrance. Some of the fragrances were easily identified and others were not. Whether right or wrong, the children were intensely involved in the creation of their stories.

"Detective Magnify" who bore a close resemblance to Columbo, came to teach a handwriting lesson during the next week. He had been searching all

over the world trying to find a clue as to what his last name meant. He found a small green die in one of the children's desks which served as the first clue. As he held the small green die up behind his magnifying glass, the children could see how the die appeared to be larger. "Detective Magnify" also found a copy of a poem hidden in the bookcase; two key words were missing in the poem. The children were told that the missing words would magically appear if each of them would neatly print the unfinished poem on their papers. After all poems were neatly printed the two missing words appeared and the children inserted them in their poems. The poem reads as follows:

Through a magnifying glass
Amazing things appear
Things that seemed so small and far
Are now so (big) and (near).

Detective Magnify now knew the meaning of his last name and went out to tell the world of his discovery.

The following Thursday morning, the children met a lady astronaut who read a story about gravity to them. After that they discussed this concept thoroughly. Next, they all closed their eyes and pretended that it was tomorrow morning and they had just come in from the playground to their classroom. When they stepped into the room, they discovered that there was no gravity inside. Each of the children were to write a story about what was happening in their room and what happened to them when they walked through the door. A great majority of the children described how desks and chairs were floating around the room and how they, too, were able to fly when they walked through the door. Through their stories it was apparent that most of the children understood the concept of gravity; I selected several of the clearest ones to be read aloud to reinforce the concept of gravity.

A bellowing "Yo Ho Ho!" informed the children of the next visitor. A friendly buccaneer asked them to close their eyes and pretend to be on a ship sailing out to sea. When they opened their eyes they discovered a sail in the middle of the room as well as a toy cannon along the wall. The buccaneer explained the terms bow, stern, starboard, and port side to the children and told them a story about four treasures that were hidden somewhere on the ship. An old buccaneer friend of his had told him how to find the treasure, but because they both had crooked arms they were unable to write down the directions to the treasures. Instead they had to remember the directions in their heads. The children were all to pretend to be buccaneers who also had crooked arms and were to listen and remember exactly the directions to the treasures. A different child was chosen to orally repeat and then follow each of the four sets of directions. If completed correctly, each of these children was allowed to keep the treasure. Children are often expected to automatically acquire good listening habits; however, with appropriate motivation, these habits can be developed and improved through classroom activities (Childers, 1970; Lundsteen, 1971).

Not all of the visitors were friendly. On the next Thursday, an unattractive, sloppily dressed housewife came to visit. She did a commercial or advertisement on 'Mush' cereal. Her acting was poor and quite boring. After

her departure, another quite attractive young lady came to visit and did a commercial on an exciting new cereal called, 'Get Up and Go'. After voting on the two commercials, the children unanimously decided that the second visitor that day was much more successful in promoting her product. We discussed several reasons why the first commercial was less appealing than the second. The children were then divided into small groups and given a blank container portraying some product type, such as crackers. They were to create a name and advertisement for their product that would be presented to the class later. Each of the two groups were given the same product type so that comparisons could be made as to which was more or less appealing and why.

Children, as well as adults, admire the ability to orally express oneself in front of a group. This lesson gave each child a chance to do just this as well as to discover and become involved in how and why certain advertisements are more successful than others.

The 'Integrity Kid' came to see the children in an effort to tie together and evaluate the entire series of seven visitor lessons. He brought a magic lasso with him that gave integrity to anyone caught in it. In his holster he carried a fresh supply of sharpened pencils that also possessed integrity. He gave each child an integrity pencil as well as a sheet of paper on which they matched the seven visitor words with the definitions. Below the matching section, the children commented, with integrity, on how they felt about all of the visitors ---- which was their favorite, and why. After all papers were completed, the Integrity Kid led them in a discussion in which they recalled each visitor, and described what they learned during each visit.

Without any formal review prior to the evaluation 81 percent of the children achieved 100 percent recall of the words.

Through my experiences with these seven lessons, I have reinforced one of my long-held beliefs: if you actively involve children with a new word or concept, they are much more likely to use it because it has become "their" word or concept. There are countless other visitors that could bring joy and excitement into your classroom if you'll only take the time to invite them.

References

Allen, Roach Van. LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES IN COMMUNICATION. Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976.

_____. "Three Approaches to Teaching Reading." CHALLENGE AND EXPERIMENT IN READING. International Reading Association Conference Proceedings, vol. 7 (1962) pp. 153-6.

Callum, Albert. PUSH BACK THE DESKS. Scholastic Magazines, Inc. (1967).

Childers, Perry R. "Listening Ability Is A Modifiable Skill". JOURNAL OF EXPERIMENTAL EDUCATION. vol. 38 (Summer 1970) pp. 1-3.

Cohen, Elaine Landau. A CASE STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN INTEGRATED LANGUAGE-EXPERIENCE APPROACH IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1976.

Dzama, Mary Ann. "Comparing Use of Generalizations of Phonics in LEA, Basal Vocabulary". The Reading Teacher. vol. 28 (February 1975) pp. 466-72.

Garman, Dorothy. "Language Patterns and Beginning Readers". The Reading Teacher. vol. 31 (January 1978) pp. 393-6.

Hall, Maryanne. "Linguistically Speaking, Why Language Experience?". The Reading Teacher. vol. 25 (January 1972) pp. 328-31.

Henderson, Edmund H. "Group Instruction in Language-Experience Approach". The Reading Teacher. vol. 26 (March 1973) pp. 589-97.

_____; Estes, Thomas; Stonecash, Susan. "An Exploratory Study of Word Acquisition Among First Graders at Midyear in a Language-Experience Approach". Journal of Reading Behavior. vol. 4 (Summer 1971-72) pp. 21-31.

Hildreth, Gertrude H. "Experience-Related Reading for School Beginners". Elementary English. vol. 42 (March 1965) pp. 280-97.

Lundsteen, Sarah. LISTENING: ITS IMPACT ON READING AND THE OTHER LANGUAGE ARTS. Urbana, Illinois: NCTE/ERIC (1971).

Mc C. Gallagher, Jo Anne. VOCABULARY RETENTION OF LOWER-CLASS STUDENTS IN LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE AND IN BASAL TEXT APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING OF READING. unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1975.

Pigge, Fred L. (ed.). "Research Studies on Sylvia Ashton-Warner's Key Vocabulary". Childhood Education. vol. 48 (May 1972) pp. 437-40. (Barnette and Duquette summarize their studies in this article).

Ruddell, Robert B. "The Effect of the Similarity of Oral and Written Patterns of Language Structure on Reading Comprehension". Elementary English. vol. 42 (April 1965) pp. 403-10.

Stauffer, Russell G. THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF READING. New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970.

Strickland, Ruth G. "The Language of Elementary School Children: Its Relationship to the Language of Reading Textbooks and the Quality of Reading of Selected Children". Bulletin of the School of Education, Indiana University. vol. 38 (July 1962).

GRAMO!

by
Roberta Rollins

Impossible! Absolutely impossible to get the kids to become genuinely involved in examining the structure of their own language, right? That was my opinion at the moment. My student teacher was struggling mightily with the course requirement: two days weekly (weakly?) devoted to grammar.

The only way a student teacher learns to be comfortable with his or her embryonic philosophy for the classroom is to let him or her in on the decision making process. Consequently, we sat down one lunchtime with our librarian and had a very productive brainstorming session. Ideas flew. From the ideas came statements which, I'm sure, are basic to all of us who face the grammar task. "I just can't see teaching parts of speech in isolation." "Nobody finds a grammar book interesting enough to actually read an assignment." "Grammar, even well memorized grammar doesn't eliminate writing problems." And on and on and on.

From this stage we moved to a more creative stage in the discussion. The final product met with such success that not only will I use it frequently, but I suggest you also might find it rewarding. Here is the method:

1. For a week or so at the beginning of a term save those errors your students make in their writing assignments which they submit to you.

2. When you have a fair sized collection of mistakes in structure, mechanics, etc., divide your class into "teams" of three or four. Explain the rules of the game, GRAMO, and prepare to enjoy a grammar lesson.

3. GRAMO rules: The teacher will write a sentence on the board and you, as a team, will try to discover the problem which keeps this sentence from being correct. (Notice the absence of the phrase "grammatical error".) After your group recognizes the mistake, one of you will be the spokesman and tell the others in the room what you deem the problem to be. A second person in your group will then present to the other groups a rule or reason to substantiate the spokesman's decision. (To help you in your work, you may consult your grammar text). It then becomes the job of the other groups to either accept or reject the work of group one. If the work is accepted by all, the first group will receive a point. (The teacher will have to be the authority in the

event that students accept a wrong decision.) If any group finds an error of judgment in the first group's work, they will receive the point if they can correct the first group's work. The team with the most points at the end of a given time period wins.

On the day that my student teacher tried out the game, I stayed in the room to see what would happen. It had sounded good to me, and he felt comfortable with it since it met his prime goal of getting away from grammar in isolation. The results were beyond our fondest hope. The kids actually got into the game wholeheartedly. The conversation within the groups as they studied the given sentence was animated and inductive. The ever-present spirit of competition was hard at work. The teams were well balanced since student teacher and I had plotted who should be where before entering the class. We coupled skilled and unskilled so that peer teaching entered the scene immediately.

Believe it or not, there were requests for GRAMO on succeeding days. It was recognized as a way to understand the art of writing based on their own submissions, a way to swallow an otherwise dull pill.

A "HOW TO" ON TEACHING PROCESS ANALYSIS

by
Jane M. Agee

In most composition classes which deal with rhetorical patterns, process analysis is included. Of all the patterns, process analysis is probably the most useful because it is, in its simplest form, giving directions. Most people have given directions from an early age, and, consequently, teachers of composition often assume that process analysis is the easiest of all the patterns for the students to master. Some, too, will omit the process essay for the same reason. However, the assumption is fallacious. I see the results of poorly constructed process analyses everyday in do-it-yourself instructions, federal forms, and oral directions. Most freshman process themes are no better, unless some consideration is given to the complexities of process analysis. Now, when I teach process, I assume nothing.

Frequently, the students, too, are guilty of assuming too much about their ability to produce a paper using process analysis. As an introduction to the complexities of this pattern, I use a simple in-class activity. First, I ask the students to draw a figure consisting of six intersecting geometric shapes, with no shape used more than twice (no names on these). Then I ask them to write instructions for duplicating the figure on a separate sheet of paper (names on these). After collecting both the figures and the instructions, I put the figure drawings on a table and distribute the instructions at random, making sure that no one gets his own. The student receiving the instructions tries to duplicate the design described, and, when finished, compares his effort with the original design on the table. I follow this activity with a general discussion on problems encountered in giving clear instructions.

After discussing the problems, we explore the choice of person in a process paper. Usually the students are delighted to learn that they can use any of the three persons, even <u>you</u>. We then look at model essays in our text, and I send them out to search for their own models. I suggest that they go to magazines as a primary source because popular magazines frequently use "how-to" pieces. Then after finding three articles (each using a different person if possible), I ask the students to write a brief summary of each article and to discuss the possible purpose of the author in choosing one person over another. Finally, I assign a rewrite of their third person article. In the rewrite, the students use second person and condense the original to suit their purpose. After this activity, we discuss the basic differences between constructing a narrative process and an instructive process.

Finally, we focus on the structure of the process paper. Since a process analysis consists of steps or stages, the student needs to think about the importance of transitions and how he will develop each stage of the process.

Commonly, college freshman use very few transitional words and phrases. Their papers tend to be series of unrelated thoughts in no particular order. Fortunately, the process pattern has an inherent order, but unless the order is clarified with appropriate transitions, the process becomes at best a list.

Unlike other rhetorical patterns where paragraphing is determined by the introduction of major ideas, paragraphing in the process analysis must mesh with the sequence of steps. To give the student every option in developing a process effectively, I use professional models from rhetorical readers as well as from magazines. Models from magazines are often useful in teaching process because of their freshness, variety, and appeal. Such magazines as POPULAR PHOTOGRAPHY, GLAMOUR, POPULAR MECHANICS, and FIELD AND STREAM provide "how-to" articles in almost every issue. And, although some teachers might object to a journalistic style, the discussion of process can include insightful comments on style as well as development. The shorter, more compact journalistic style and short, one-step paragraphs provide an excellent contrast to longer descriptive pieces which are more fully developed. Also, looking at a variety of methods when teaching development emphasizes the importance of paragraphing options in all rhetorical patterns.

For me, the rewards of teaching process come with the students' interest in sharing some particular knowledge. I have learned how to rappel, refinish antiques, worship Buddha, travel in Spain, and deliver a foal. In effect, process essays can provide an opportunity to develop a working relationship between student and teacher.

UP, UP AND AWAY TO THE WORLD OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

by
Margaret Miles

Have you ever agreed to teach a certain class or section and then got cold feet and debated about changing your name and flying to Spain?

Last spring I enthusiastically agreed to teach Children's Literature at Marietta College. Twenty-four hours later I found myself not packing for Spain but rationalizing as to how my experience would help get me through the course. My years of teaching pre-school, high school, and college would help. I love children and books and I vaguely recall my "kiddy lit" class as an undergraduate in the late sixties.

The reality of teaching a three hour semester course to juniors and seniors hit me as I ran through all the listings of Children's Literature in the card catalogue and a few volumes of READER'S GUIDE. Teaching experience and memories would do little to prepare me.

Usually professional journals have been life-savers in certain situations offering clever ideas and advice. But any actual preliminary research suggestions for the teaching of Children's Literature could not be found. Throughout my research and teaching of the course I kept two journals: one a personal reaction-type journal, one a catalogue of my "process" steps in selecting and organizing material. I'd like to offer some short-cuts to those opening the door to the research department of children's literature as a high school unit or college class. I also hope to convince those standing in line with assumed names and airplane tickets to Spain not to give up just yet.

Before I give you a "guaranteed to work plan" I want to warn you of a near-fatal disease. I became inflicted with "under-cover browsing." I became an addict and had to read everything written on children's literature before I organized my course.

Do not take the last four years of LANGUAGE ARTS and HORN BOOK to bed with you. Browsing under the covers can last into the dawn. Night after night I gathered the periodicals around my sheets, skimmed and took random notes of "clever ideas." This method of "warming up" to the subject is not only a waste of time but rather self-defeating. I didn't generate any original ideas. I absorbed but I didn't react or create.

I have divided the article into two parts: "Before the balloon takes off" -- or aids to preliminary research and "The view from mid-air" -- or suggestions for course requirements and ideas based on my experience.

I. Preliminary Research - Before the Balloon Takes Off

A. Background Reading

If the disease I mentioned is avoided, controlled early outside reading is helpful. Reading gimmicky ideas in professional magazines should be avoided until you have made some preliminary decisions about the course--mainly the approach you will use and the selection of textbook. The following titles are good for quick, useful background information. The two articles listed were xeroxed and required as part of the class's reserve reading.

Cullinan, Bernice. LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN. ITS DISCIPLINE AND CONTENT. Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1971.

Cullinan, B. and Carmichael, C. LITERATURE AND YOUNG CHILDREN. Urbana: NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH, 1977.

Haviland, Virginia. CHILDREN AND LITERATURE VIEWS AND REVIEWS. Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1973.

Hazard, Paul. BOOKS, CHILDREN AND MEN.

Smith, James. A CRITICAL APPROACH TO CHILDREN'S LITERATURE. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.

Frye, Northrop. "Elementary Teaching and Elemental Scholarship." PMLA, (1964), 11-18.

Lewis, C.S. "On Three Ways of Writing for Children." HORN BOOK MAGAZINE, 38 (1963), 459-469. Rpt. in CHILDREN AND LITERATURE VIEWS AND REVIEWS. Ed. Virginia Haviland. Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1973, pp. 231-240.

B. Reading of Criticism

Examine some of the criticism of children's literature. The field is highly controversial. The criticism camp is divided into those who see the literature as separate from adult literature and evaluate it using separate literary standards, and those who see children and adult literature as part of the same body of literature and use adult literary standards. There are a few who vascillate between the two camps, and judge a children's book according to its immediate effect on the child.

In addition to the books previously mentioned the following authors offer their reactions to critical theories and offer their own theories:

Heins, Paul. "Coming to Terms With Criticism." HORN BOOK MAGAZINE, 46 August 1970), 370-375. Rpt. in CHILDREN AND LITERATURE. Ed. Haviland pp. 408-412.

Heins, Paul. "Out on a Limb with the Critics." HORN BOOK MAGAZINE, 46 (June 1970), 264-273. Rpt. in CHILDREN AND LITERATURE. Ed. Haviland, pp. 400-407.

Fenwick, Sara. A CRITICAL APPROACH TO CHILDREN'S LITERATURE. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.

Smith, Lilian. THE UNRELUCTANT YEARS: A CRITICAL APPROACH TO CHILDREN'S LITERATURE. American Library Association, 1953.

An introductory lecture should summarize various viewpoints of critical theories and each student should be encouraged to formulate his own critical theory of literature by the end of the class. Only then can his critical examination of the literature be of any value to him.

C. Deciding the Best Approach

Although this advice may seem obvious to some of you, there are as many approaches as guests at the Madhatter's tea party in ALICE IN WONDERLAND! Each of the following approaches is a popular one and your choice will automatically determine the structure of the course.

James Smith in A CRITICAL APPROACH TO CHILDREN'S LITERATURE outlines five basic approaches prior to defending his own. (The names of the approaches are his; the descriptions are mine.)

1. "The Historical Approach" - Similar to a traditional college literature survey course - a chronological study of books, authors and trends.

2. "The Subject-Matter Approach" - almost a potpourri of common subjects found in children's books - for example, all the books about cars, cats, dogs. Fiction and non-fiction cross lines.

3. "The Types Approach" - traditional types -- folktales, fables, poetry, fantasies, historical fiction, humor are studied as individual types. Some are grouped by subject matter, some by origin, some by purpose.

4. "The Phychological Approach" - An examination of children's needs based on the assumption that "all children have desires that they try to fulfill, by, among other ways, reading and listening to stories and poetry."

5. "The Application Approach" - learning about the literature in terms of the educational applications - a "how to" approach. Specific situations, holidays, rest times, weather conditions, are explained through stories.

Smith feels that although these may be "useful" ways to teach the literature, they do not critically analyze the children's books. He believes the study of the nature of the literature will inductively lead students to ask relevant questions concerning how the "literature manifests itself and what

transpires in it." He divides his book into three sections: "The Relativistic Conception of Value in Children's Literature," "The Literary View of Children's Literature," and "The Nature of Literary Value."

D. Textbook Selection

The various approaches are worth examining but I had trouble deciding on one approach. I decided at this point to stop my research of the history and criticism of children's literature and review textbooks. The text's format would determine my approach. I ordered five textbooks, evaluated each and chose Charlotte Huck's CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976). In the preface Huck emphasizes how important it is to teach children to become discriminating readers. She views the book as a reference book for teachers, students, librarians and parents, as a guide for developing criteria for evaluating children's books, and as a tool for coordinating books into the curriculum.

Her approach is actually a combination of approaches outlined by Smith. The text is divided into three sections: "Learning About Children and Books," "Knowing Children's Literature," and "Developing a Literature Program." In the latest edition she includes information on "crisis literature" -- books focusing on death, divorce and aging.

Huck devotes little time to the psychological aspects of the literature. I decided to include some reserve reading of Bruno Bettleheim's THE USES OF ENCHANTMENT: THE MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF FAIRY TALES (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1976). It is a terrific book for the promoting of class discussions. A good follow through activity is to have the class read an original Grimm's fairy tale and contrast their impressions with Bettleheim's interpretations. Anthony Arthur in his article "The Uses of Bettelheim's The Uses of Enchantment" LANGUAGE ARTS 55 (April 1978), pp. 455-460 offers some useful advice for incorporating Bettelheim's book in the classroom. By the end of the term six students had ordered their own paperback copies and one student analyzed all of the book's reviews.

II. The View From Mid-Air

A. Course Requirements

Once you have flirted with some outside readings, decided on your approach and text, you can relax and enjoy the view! The actual execution of a syllabus and course requirements is the easy part.

I assigned two short papers, one oral project, file cards reviewing books, and a final exam. Death and sex in children's books seem to be popular subjects for papers. The study of an author or illustrator and his works was a close second. A textbook by a husband and wife team, Sadker and Sadker, NOW UPON A TIME (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), offers some interesting information on contemporary issues. Chapter titles include, "Sex in Fact and Fiction," "Family Matters," and "Breaking Out of the Pumpkin Shell: The Image of Women in Children's Literature." I kept one copy on reserve for those doing papers on the "nontraditional" types of children's literature.

Oral projects lasting seven to ten minutes are effective. Many seniors had forgotten how to deliver a speech. The discipline was good, but most of all the speeches enlightened the students to areas not covered in the lectures. One girl spoke on bees and the need to educate children of their value to society. She felt too many children are automatically afraid of bees and therefore, do not appreciate them. After donning a bee keeper's mask and gloves she summarized several fiction and non-fiction books on bees and concluded with a honey tasting party!

Maintaining a filing system of books reviewed is a major part of the course. Certain guidelines and a clear rationale for the assignment must be given to the students. Too often the file cards can turn into "busy work." I required fifty cards and subdivided them into categories. Each student had to examine ten periodicals, ten Caldecott winners and one Newberry, and thirty books of their choice - usually broken into categories we studied.

Field experience is important as many have never read a story to a child or observed a classroom. The two physics majors found this part of the course a "challenge." Each student had to observe a classroom and participate in a preschool story hour.

The final consisted of facts from the lectures, the text and the oral projects. Students were responsible for reading the text; I based my lectures on outside reading sources.

B. Organization of Class Time

Hopefully many of you won't be faced with a three hour night class. Although the world of fairies, picture books and nursery rhymes is fascinating, a three hour class demands variety in its organization. I used the last hour for presentations by guest speakers, small group discussions, films, or feed-back sessions concerning children's books used in the lecture.

The speakers included a school psychologist, the Washington County Librarian, an elementary teacher and an art professor. The latter had experience in illustrating children's books and she brought her books and slides to class and even drew on her easel.

Usually each class period I lugged in a box of books alluded to during the lecture. In a class of thirty students holding up a book is not very effective. I designed small group discussions with each group concentrating on a different aspect of the book.

The films I showed I rented for a dollar from the public library. Students had to read the text prior to seeing the film. I recommend the following:

"Annie and the Old One" by Miska Miles.
"Many Moons" by James Thurber.
"Harold and the Purple Crayon" by Crockett Johnson.
"Picture Book Animated" a close-up of the animation process.
"Hailstones and Halibut Bones" by Mary O'Neill.
"Green Eggs and Ham" by Dr. Seuss.

C. Study Questions

Students reading 100 pages a week from the text and taking notes from lectures tend to panic early about final exams--a feeling not hard to sympathize with as the leaves are just beginning their fall dances. I resorted to study-guide questions to help them pull together the important details. Before class I scribbled eight to ten questions on the board. Actually this procedure helped me tremendously. The questions kept me on the right track and forced me to organize my lecture notes.

D. Classroom Activities

Motivating students - a concern for all of us. The following works well if strategically placed:

1. "Guess Who I Am" - Borrowing from the old parlor game of matching authors and titles, I prepared file cards with the names of characters from fiction. With cards pinned to their backs, half the class had to guess their "identities" by asking the remaining half questions. "Tinkerbell," "Little Miss Muffett," and "Heidi" were the last ones guessed. Usually this "light diversion" is the most effective during the first class meeting--a good way for people to meet one another.

2. Poetry Festival - I chose a date near the end of the term and had students prepare small group presentations. Each group agreed on a general theme and prepared bibliographies of poetry anthologies used to hand out to the class. Having students write poetry (haikus and limericks) is fun and gives them a chance to become familiar with the types of poetry.

3. Caldecott Award Day - I prepared lists of Caldecott winners and distributed different lists to small groups. Students read ten Caldecott winners from their list and wrote a short paper defending their overall preference. They also read the acceptance speech of the illustrator of the title chosen located in the August issue of HORN BOOK MAGAZINE and TOP OF THE NEWS. During the award day groups discussed their choices and class voting took place.

E. Free Material

In addition to free examination copies from obliging publishers, a few available "freebies" include:

Simmons College in Boston is one of the few schools to offer an M.A. in Children's Literature. Their free brochure CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE describes their courses and acts as a good guide for determining the most important aspects of children's literature.

The American Library Association publishes each year a list of "Notable Children's Books" followed by good descriptions of each book.

Compton's Encyclopedia offers a reprint of their section on children's literature. The most useful section is "Giant Steps in Children's Literature."

Exceptional foreign authors and their books are listed under the corresponding continent.

Now are you enjoying the view? Drop into the world of children's literature. You won't be disappointed as you meet new friends and become reacquainted with old ones. Whether you plan to teach a "mini-unit" or a college semester course I urge you to use the books and ideas I have recommended. They will make your journey a little less tedious and hopefully, a lot smoother.

Suggested Reference Books Not Previously Mentioned:

Arbuthnot, Mary and Sutherland. THE ARBUTHNOT ANTHOLOGY OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE. Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1976.

Ciancolo, Patricia. ILLUSTRATIONS IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS. Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Company, 1976.

Lukens, Rebecca. A CRITICAL HANDBOOK OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE. Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1976.

Tiedt, Iris. EXPLORING BOOKS WITH CHILDREN. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1979.

Townsend, John. WRITTEN FOR CHILDREN. Boston: The Horn Book, Inc., 1974.

MID-CAREER MANAGEMENT

by
Harley L. Sachs

You have just completed the first lecture of the new term and a freshman looking no younger than freshmen have ever looked since you started in academics twenty years ago comes up to you. "Professor?"

"Yes?"

"My father told me to look you up. He had you when he was a student at this university."

Unlike Mr. Chips, you don't remember his father, for in twenty years you have taught literally thousands like him. It is flattering that his father remembered you. What is a shock, and what sets you reeling for days afterwards, is that you are at the mid-career passage. Retirement is not imminent, but it is clearly on the horizon.

Your thirtieth birthday was traumatic. Heavens, you were entering middle age! Forty was tougher, and having reached the back side of the hill you were goaded into having that last fling, finishing that degree, completing that project, or in some way fulfilling the dream you had at thirty and didn't quite get around to accomplishing. Now, nearing fifty, you seriously consider, is this what I want to do the rest of my working life? At fifty, having become neither a department head nor a dean, you'll be suspected of being tenured deadwood. Students will whisper about your stereotyped self. Administrators will grumble. Politicians may shout. Are you unpromotable?

Not everyone who is competent as a professor would be competent as a department head, pushing paper and serving on committees. Nor is every competent head or chairman capable of promotion to dean, and so on. Nor should they be expected to be promotable. There'd be a fearful crush at the top if everyone fought for those positions. So at mid-career, at your level of competence, with no desire for administrative promotion, you wonder about the years you have left. One thing sure: you won't get higher than full professor, and you've had so many raises that you suspect the administration would joyfully generate more credit hours with two instructors for the price of you.

Twenty years in a career should get you to the top. The law of diminishing returns should have told you that after twenty years of teaching a certain obligatory percentage of introductory courses you'd run out of things to learn, run out of challenge, and risk running beyond the capacities of the students who are, after all, enrolled in 101, not the special area you've put your research heart into. Freshman English (insert here History, Chemistry, Physics--the

subject of your own calling) does get dull after awhile. Those experiments and papers do tend to repeat and repeat.

It's the same in other professions. My neighbor, the chief engineer on a ship, after twenty years of the same engines and the same voyages, has tired of it. Another friend, after twenty years of performing the insurance sales pitch, couldn't stand the sound of his own voice reciting it. How many years does it take in any profession before you reach that plateau where the task you are required to do is no longer challenging? Ten? Twenty? Faculties get tired, too.

But faculties also get killed off. Pressures for more and more productivity for less and less purchasing power, for larger and larger sections and fewer and fewer specialty courses kill incentive. Teaching isn't as much fun as it was when the book keepers are breathing down your neck. At our institution the faculty is encouraged to apply for grants on the principle that the university can't afford to keep you unless you find at least half your salary in the form of outside funds. Of course, you are encouraged to publish--in academic journals that pay you nothing, may demand a subsidy fee, and then insist that they retain all reprint rights just in case a commercial publisher wants to buy your article for an anthology! If your research does lead to a patent, it belongs to the university. If the overhead costs are ever overtaken by license fees you might get a small percentage of the surplus.

It is no wonder that, years ago, your friend in Chemistry gave up what is called "professional development" to devote his energies to building student apartments. Another found that since he could not be promoted, or discovered he was not as talented as he hoped, there was considerable reward in the local service club. The energy that used to go into research now goes to organizing the Boy Scout pancake breakfast. There's more fun in fishing (insert motor boating, football watching--your own diversion) than professional development. Building that boat (airplane, cabin) is more rewarding than academics. Academics, after twenty years, is just a job.

Are these developments the natural course of events or are they the result of poor career management and poor administration? No amount of goading or threatening is going to make a bored and tired faculty member suddenly turn into an eager, aspiring genius.

My institution is in the throes of a new wave of long range planning using management by objectives. What is the objective of someone who has been on the job twenty years? Chances are, he's already been killed off or is bored stiff. Trout season is more appealing than a file-and-forget planning document.

Maybe this wouldn't happen if we didn't plan to stay in one career for our entire working lives. Twenty years of the introductory courses are enough for anybody. Freshmen are more than satisfied with one term. A potted plant that grows must be repotted. It outgrows its confines. Faculty outgrow the potentials of their jobs, too. Instead of being rootbound, academicians--faculty and administrators--should plan to leave. A person should stay in a career only as long as it remains challenging and stimulating. That's where the rewards are and the self-satisfaction. Without personal growth any job becomes lever pulling.

When a young faculty member is first hired the questions should be asked, "How long do you plan to remain in academics? What related interests offer alternative careers? Which can make the most of your talent if, as has frequently happened, the university closes? How do you keep your options open?"

Diversion of those energies and all that education into the pancake breakfast or the junior hockey program may be admirable public service, but it is not professional growth. It does not offer career alternatives. Long range planners will be sorely disappointed to learn that the objective one is managing toward is to be president of Kiwanis or pancake caterer.

The suggestion that career management should plan for short term careers should not come as a surprise. It does demand a change in attitudes and in fringe benefit offerings--portable pensions and insurance policies. It suggests diversity, not specialization. It suggests greater flexibility between related industries--the teacher of engineering moving into industry, the English teacher working as an editor or writer, the editor moving into academics as a communications specialist. Mid-career management should include not only the conventional sabbaticals, research excursions, and teaching exchanges which are "in the interests of the university" but in directions related to the interests of the faculty member who may want to try out another career. Without new challenges and stimuli, the last years of a lifetime career can be bleak. Waiting until mid-career before planning for new horizons and challenges may be too late.

THERE'LL ALWAYS BE A SETRIGHT

by
Carole Koontz

About a year and a half ago, I discovered, thanks to my husband, a disturbing irony related to the current fuss about "the basics" and literacy. With a challenging attitude, he thrust under my nose the September, 1977, issue of CAR AND DRIVER, turned to a column at the very end of the magazine. He ordered me to read the article and give him my opinion of it. I wasn't sure whether he was setting me up for an argument on some point of language or whether he was about to revive some old argument on automobiles. Nonetheless, I read the column by a British writer/automobile enthusiast named L.J. K. Setright.

I replied to my husband that it was very well-written. He agreed. But he then advised me to read the letters to the editor in that same issue. As I read those letters, vehemently expressing the utmost contempt for the editor's choice of Setright as a columnist and in general lashing out at the writer's choice of words and style, I felt those old stirrings of defensiveness that I, like so many English teachers, have continually tried to suppress. These feelings resulted from all the propaganda declaring that English teachers must not be doing their job because according to selected instances and statistics, so many students fall miserably below the level of competence that back in the "good old days" everybody attained. Spurred by these feelings, I decided to investigate further the controversy surrounding L.J.K. Setright by evaluating his writing from the point of view of an English teacher.

Setright's writing embodies all the qualities English teachers could ever hope to see in the writing of their best students (or in their own!) and all that those who advocate sound education (which produces literate individuals) hold as sacred. His writing is formal, polished, and urbane. It exhibits mastery of the elements of style that make outstanding prose.

Specifically, Setright's writing is well-structured. Not only is he particularly adept at writing introductions and conclusions (a skill which most students find hard to perfect), but he is also skilled in writing unified paragraphs that have sentence variety in structure and length, coherence through use of transitions, and clarity through use of appropriate words. He uses a highly sophisticated vocabulary, such as "amenable," "idiosyncratic," "insidious," "obdurate," "panacea," "specious," and "sycophant."

In addition, Setright's columns include examples of figurative language. A car "as abdurate as new boots" and "snickety-slick shifts" (August, 1977, p. 116) are examples of his ability with similes and onomatopoeia, respectively. Frequently his writing makes allusions to or quotes writers and/or literature: Walt Whitman (September, 1977); T.S. Eliot (February, 1979); Shakespeare (December, 1978); Samuel Butler (May, 1978); Rousseau (December, 1978); and the BIBLE (July, 1977).

Furthermore, Setright's writing displays a control of tone. For example, the last two paragraphs in the September, 1977 issue exhibit a serious tone appropriate to the purpose of the column-- to object to the overabundance of anti-motoring legislation:

> The erosion of individual liberties is a feature of the political development of a society, with the state usurping the conscience and the prerogatives of the individual (which include the right to look after himself) in exchange for some kind of theoretical security that often appears specious and invariably proves ruinous. Freedom of movement is one of the first things to suffer, and speed limits achieve just that. The ferocity of this constraint is concealed, of course-- by economic fictions or by tender expressions of concern for road deaths. It is sheer hypocrisy: Road deaths are not significant. Nephritis kills twice as many; have you noticed a governmental campaign against nephritis?
>
> The lifeblood of a nation is not oil. It may be money, but the amounts saved by speed limits are trifling compared with the losses caused by traffic delays. Perhaps the real lifeblood is the traffic itself, which should be free to circulate, not forced to coagulate. And if it be the blood of the people that matters, there is no evidence that making them go slowly will make them spill any less. Is it worth the worry, the guilt complex, the waste of the time that is synonymous with life? Perhaps we have reached the moment when, in the words of Walt Whitman, 'The populace rise at once against the never-ending audacity of elected persons.'

More commonly, Setright's tone is more relaxed, as exhibited in these introductory and concluding paragraphs from a column on rallying cars in the November, 1978 issue:

> I want a sports car. You want a sports car. All God's chillun want sports cars. When I git to heaven gonna drive a sports car, gonna race all over God's heaven. But in the meantime, what with the weather down here being less reliable, and clothes getting more expensive, and the danger that pneumonia might force me to go solo before I am ready for my wings, I think I will stay in tintops, and I would be surprised if you did not do the same. Still, it is a bit worrying, this need to have something that at least feels and goes and generally behaves like a sports car.
>
> I mean, you want to keep your hand in so that when your time comes you will not be at a loss to know how to drive your heavenly hot rod. You want something with speed and directional stability, for if you cannot make the best of the straight and narrow you will never get there. Remember, too, that the road to The Other Place is paved with good intentions; better and safer by far to stick to roads where bad intentions predominate. Down here in the concrete jungle you must devote yourself to lots of furious cornering, forceful overtaking, and plenty of opposite-lock practice that will stand you in good stead for the day when you can go broadsiding across the Elysian fields. If you want to get to heaven in a hurry, you must do your damnedest on the earth roads.

> That, as far as I can see, is what rallying is all about: it is full of heavy-handed, heavy-footed candidates for passing up, all doing their damnedest on earth roads....
>
> If you want to do your damnedest and yet postpone that fateful day, if your idea of a motoring heaven could be here on earth, this is the kind of high-performance car that will neither let you down nor send you up. Take for granted that it will streak on the straights add wind through the wiggles; it must yet have the nerve and the verve to do the impossible when everything else has become impractical. When you are all set up to turn right but find when fully committed that the only way out of the impending accident is to turn left; when you must stop on a length of loose-surfaced road that is shorter than the straightforward braking distance; when you are in a position so dangerous that salvation depends on catapulting yourself out of it-- at times like these, the rally-bred sporting tintop is something for which (short of a Dino or voluntary euthanasia) there is no effective substitute. At least, I never knew anyone who was likely to go to heaven in one.

He can employ parody and wit in his writing, producing delightful prose.

These examples (though admittedly a poor substitute for the experience of reading a Setright column in its entirety) exhibit the aforementioned characteristics of outstanding writing. And a few readers of CAR AND DRIVER have acknowledged this. One called Setright "a breath of fresh air" (September, 1977, p. 10). Another (July, 1977, p. 14) praised CAR AND DRIVER for including Setright's column, which would force the reader to use his dictionary at least once a month. Even a professor of classics applauded Setright's writing (April, 1979, p. 10).

Far too many readers, however, raise objection to Setright. Some call him a "pretentious ass," "a pedantic bore" (September, 1977, p. 10). One reader decreed that Setright's "literary style was useless to the reader" (September, 1977, p. 10). Another reader, a law student, claimed that after he had studied law books all day he didn't want to have to tax his brain with Setright's writing (September, 1977, p. 10). What is even sadder is that many of those who dislike Setright have claimed that he is a purveyor of gobbledygook or doublespeak and their letters to the editor contain clever mimickings of what they have erroneously identified. One reader who was "perceptive" about Setright's supposed atrocious corruption of English stated that Setright's "flatulence-filled paragraphs gives to we colonials numerous clues to Great Britain's steady decline" (September, 1977, p. 10).

And so the controversy has continued for several years as Setright continues to be a regular columnist in CAR AND DRIVER. But why should people protest so vigorously about the inclusion of Setright's columns in CAR AND DRIVER? Only one answer is clear to me, and it is the same fact that has irritated me when I heard the cries of "Let's get back to the basics," "Johnny can't read," and "Johnny can't write." The fact is that most people could care less about literacy. They don't really want or appreciate excellence in written communication. Whether it be from laziness or from ignorance, they reject the model characteristic of what "back-to-basics" proponents think English teachers should be teaching students. This ideal, this model repulses

the average reader who, according to "back-to-basics" advocates, should gladly accept this model as a yardstick for competence and be willing to emulate it.

That Setright is British is not significant to the issue of literacy *per se*, though readers often use that as an excuse for rejecting his writing. As representative of the ideal, Setright will, unfortunately, remain formidable and unapproachable to most readers, who lack the determination to rise to his level of competence.

It is this unfortunate irony that makes the entire "basics" movement seem foolhardy. To force literary excellence onto a society that wants only mediocrity is futile. No amount of "basics" will change the attitude of people who want the easiest way to go. Of course, English teachers, who are educated in the best traditions and who are sensitive to the subtleties of language and its changing nature, will continue to do their best in language arts instruction. Some students will excel in written communication and others will, at best, appreciate quality writing and will be uplifted by language used well. English teachers can take comfort in that and be proud of their efforts in spite of any criticism. Unfortunately, a far greater percentage of students will fall into the average mass whose attitude and lack of motivation will prompt the advocates of the "basics" to crusade. And so the vicious cycle will continue as it has in the past for more years than even "back-to-basics" advocates realize.

For there'll always be a Setright, whether in CAR AND DRIVER or elsewhere to create controversy. The Setrights will steadfastly maintain a position of literary excellence in written communication while those who would force ideals on others who are uncomfortable with them will continue to flit about from school board meetings to PTA meetings with their unfounded cries of "Let's get back to the basics," generally not having a very clear notion of what that means.

RESEARCH SUPPORT FOR TEACHING SPELLING

by
W. Geiger Ellis

It's Monday and the teacher says, "Copy the list of words from the board for your spelling test on Friday." On Friday the same teacher predictably says, "Clear your desks and on a sheet of notebook paper number from one to ten." Thus goes the standard spelling routine in high schools across the country, a routine often lamented as one more evidence of the movement labeled "Back to Basics," which carries a gratuitous implication that a leave-taking had occurred.

Whether administrators demand it or teachers choose it, the approach to spelling instruction varies little in most high school classrooms, and the intensity of convictions both pro and con are second only to those about teaching grammar. How refreshing it would be to see practice guided by research; indeed, some surprises await the inquiring teacher.

Selecting words for spelling instruction would appear a logical starting point, but I would be satisfied if two criteria were met: (1) The students have some use for the words. That is, students may be reasonably expected to encounter a need for the words in the foreseeable future. (2) The students do not already know how to spell the selected words. Both of these criteria address student needs.

Setting the words for study before students in list form is fairly standard practice. Yet I, and I believe many other English educators, have often recommended presenting words in some meaningful context, surely a reasonable sounding suggestion. The fact is that research has consistently found the list format more successful than a contextual format.

After investigating the performances of eight groups of students who were divided between those who encountered the spelling words in column form (list) and those whose encounter was in phrase form (context), McKee reported, "Pupils who studied and were tested by the column form seemed to have acquired a greater amount of spelling ability than did the pupils who studied and were tested by the phrase form." (McKee, p. 254)

Since spelling and vocabulary study are frequently linked, the effect of one on the other bears attention. Although no research specifically addresses this question, it has been contended that "it is generally a waste of time to review the meanings of all the words being given in a (spelling) test. In those cases where common meanings of words in the test list are not known to a pupil, of course, the meanings should be briefly considered through oral explanations or use of the dictionary." (T. Horn, 1969, p. 1288)

Once the teacher has presented the words, there should be a period of instruction. Unfortunately, most high school teachers move from presentation to test with only an admonition "to study" during the intervening days. Research

provides guidance with a number of findings. Whole words should be the focus of study. No type of segmenting facilitates learning; rather it impedes. The common practice of syllabication has been shown to be counterproductive.

Thomas Horn investigated the effect of syllabic presentation of words on students' ability to learn their spelling. Included in this study was the assigning of words to categories which might have shown that at least certain types of words are best studied in syllabic form. His findings led to this conclusion: "There is no advantage in presenting words in syllabified form." (T. Horn, 1949, p. 271) In fact, for certain words "There is evidence to indicate that syllabic presentation may have a negative effect on learning to spell." (Ibid, p. 272)

Likewise, drawing attention to troublesome letter combinations within words does not lead to improved spelling. To the contrary, such an approach has been shown to hurt spelling performance.

Rosemeir investigated the effect of forewarning students about potential errors in spelling and found that "those treatments using negative forewarning were significantly inferior to those involving no forewarning." (Rosemeir, p. 309) Tireman's study led him to write, "The data show that marking hard spots is of little or no value." (Tireman, p. 117)

Consistent with these findings are those studies showing the inefficacy of learning spelling by phonic rules, for these too focus on parts of words rather than on whole words.

Ernest Horn, after his examination of phonetics and spelling, concluded that "little justification is found for the claim that pupils can arrive deductively at the spelling of most words they can pronounce." (E. Horn, 1957, p. 432) The most optimistic suggestion for a phonetic approach to spelling comes from the computer analysis of phoneme-grapheme relationships which "suggests that words to be learned might be carefully grouped in a way to allow pupils to arrive inductively at certain sound-letter generalizations." (T. Horn, 1969, p. 1288, citing Hannah) The difficulty with this suggestion is that it is focused on an organizing task beyond the limits of most teachers and, more significantly, it does not address the real problem--the exceptions to the generalizations.

An effective instructional technique may be based upon the long-established learning principle of distributed practice. Concentrated practice such as having students repeatedly write words during a single session is boring and non-productive. (Greene and Petty, p. 404) On the other hand, opportunities for recall lead to increased learning. The coupling of these principles will enhance student performance. Specifically, having students write words by recall once on each of several occasions is a sound technique.

If only one change were to be made in classroom practice, it should be the incorporation of a self-corrected pretest. Two of the foremost authorities on the teaching of spelling have committed themselves to this position. Thomas Horn wrote, ". . . tests administered before related study are basic to the instructional program. . . . The corrected-test technique is by far the most

efficient single procedure for learning to spell if the students (1) clearly understand the purpose of the pretest; (2) immediately correct their errors with care; and (3) understand that alert correction of the "pretest" contributes greatly to the reduction of errors." (T. Horn, 1969, p. 1292)

Similarly in support of this approach, Ernest Horn stated, "When corrected by the pupils and the results are properly utilized, the test is the most fruitful single learning activity (per unit of time) that has yet been devised." (E. Horn, 1967, pp. 17-18)

Such strong opinions are based on unrefuted research evidence over the years. After studying the performances of 268 students under a variety of teaching formats, Thomas Horn concluded, "The corrected test appears to be the most important single factor contributing to achievement in spelling." (T. Horn, 1947, p. 285)

It is clear that attention to spelling instruction can be fruitful. Select the words sensibly. Administer a pretest which students correct themselves. List the words needing study. On successive days give students opportunities to recall the spelling of those words by practice tests or other means with immediate feedback. Throughout, keep the focus on whole words. A thirty to forty minute investment each week can bring gains in your students' spelling.

REFERENCES

Greene, Harry A. and Walter T. Petty. DEVELOPING LANGUAGE SKILLS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS. Fourth edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971.

Hannah, Paul R. and others. PHONEME-GRAPHEME CORRESPONDENCES AS CLUES TO SPELLING IMPROVEMENT. USOE Cooperative Research Project No. 1991. GPO, 1966. 1715 pp.

Horn, Ernest. "Phonetics and Spelling," ELEMENTARY SCHOOL JOURNAL, Vol. 57, May 1957.

_____. TEACHING SPELLING: WHAT RESEARCH SAYS TO THE TEACHER. Association of Classroom Teachers, National Education Association. Washington, 1967.

Horn, Thomas D. "The Effect of the Corrected Test on Learning to Spell," ELEMENTARY SCHOOL JOURNAL, Vol. 47, January 1947.

_____. "Learning to Spell as Affected by Syllabic Presentation of Words," ELEMENTARY SCHOOL JOURNAL, Vol. 49, January 1949.

_____. "Spelling," ENCYCLOPEDIA OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH. Fourth edition. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969.

McKee, P. "Teaching Spelling by Column and Context Forms," JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH, Vol. 15, April 1927.

Rosemeir, R.A. "Effectiveness of Forewarning about Errors in Response-Selective Learning," JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY, Vol. 56, 1965.

Tireman, Lloyd S. "The Value of Marking Hard Spots in Spelling." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Iowa, 1927.

NOTE THE ABSENCE OF SYMPATHY

by
Bob Bullock

Basically, I don't know anything. You must keep this in mind as I go on. I'm not too sure anyone else knows anything either, though maybe that's beside the point. But I'm willing to talk as if I do, because I still think worthwhile things can be accomplished, somehow, through knowledgeable talk which is really, from my side at least, only consciously calculated pretense. Having gotten this bit out of the way I now feel free to go ahead and flaunt my stupidity . . . .

The most basic thing I can think of is survival. We have to demonstrate competence in this skill of staying alive before we can think, discuss, or do anything else. But if "alive" is just a matter of breathing, sleeping, eating, copulating, defecating and so forth, then all of civilization must be nothing more than a vast network of "organized" superfluity and fraud. Yet Confusius and Dante are essential enough to suit me, and they seemed to see something vital and valuable in civilization, beyond its noise and vanity. Besides, we all know by now that there is more to life than biological competency -- civilization, and education, are based on the premise; and K'ung and Guido's pal were not fools.

The human soul, or genius, or spirit, demands further realization and gratification than mere physical sustenance affords. This gratification is perceived as beauty, thought of as truth, felt as love, and outwardly energized in personal strength and grace. All things worthwhile in civilization have occurred in the process of men's and women's attempts to gratify these higher needs. When these are denied or ignored the capacity for apprehension, appreciation, and involvement with life is diminished, begins to atrophy, and if it does not wither and disappear entirely, might just as well for all the good it does anyone.

Entropy is the pervasive, universal urge to knock off, pass out, let "somebody else" handle it. The effort required to overcome this down-spin and respond curiously and selectively to the enviornment is sometimes too much to summon. We all know what it's like to lack the essential wherewithall necessary to the act of lifting and moving an arse across the room, to turn off the TV. We all also know (or have at <u>least</u> heard of) zombies -- mechanical, blindly compelled, totally unoriginal, with tombstone eyes. Some of us may have very close friends who are zombies; and some of us may in fact be zombies.

Survival involves the ability to overcome entropy and recognize, in time, ruts, traps, and black holes of all sorts; and to be able to act appropriately enough to stay clear of them (or at least get loose before too long, or you know what). It involves cunning, by which I mean not just trickery but the

ability to perceive dangerous imbalances, un-rightnesses, in the immediate environment. Most of us are sharp enough not to set up poker games on the freeway; and usually we don't build our glass houses on ledges of shale in blasting areas, drink Drano, or attempt to harm small children in the presence of the Incredible Hulk. Some of us are even sagacious enough to realize that if we pour poison into the air and water today we are liable to be breathing and drinking the same stuff tomorrow.

Physically, we've got, if we want, the situation under control. That we are systematically and wantonly destroying the only natural environment we have is evidence of psychological and spiritual immaturity, daftness, and our continued existence as individuals and as a species depends upon our evolution in these two basic areas. If we don't feel like really living (psychological) and don't have some reason, beyond the temporal, for living (spiritual), then we can chomp down all the iodized Wheaties in Iowa and still be as dead as concrete piles.

The basics of education are integrally and necessarily related to the basics of living. Since psychological and spiritual survival are what this stage of our evolution is all about, all educational talk, theory, and practice which is not directly geared to "teaching" that is, if not fraud, at least superfluous. It does not matter in the least how well anyone can read, write, or add if he or she can't even make conscious, self-responsible choices about what to do with these skills -- where, when, with what and whom to and not to use them; choices that reflect a vital interest not only in one's own development but that of humanity as well. We can build machines to read, write, and add -- but we can build machines to do a lot of things we persist in wasting precious human life on. Those of us who murder the impulses of the human soul in order to meet production standards, on the assembly line or in the English classroom; who would train young people to be good cogs in a mindless and inhumane machine are, to be blunt, idiots and fools, perpetrators of ignorance, and masters of -- yes, folks -- death.

Most of us, being naturally self-protective, will rear back and deny any fit of these epithets to ourselves. We believe, or like to think, that what we are doing, fraught with "human imperfection" though it is, is for the good -- kids need to know these things that we're teaching them whether they know it or not, like it or not. Unsung heroes and heroines, it's true, and in some cases martyrs to the cause. But of what -- enlightenment; scholasticism; socialization; or stultification?

Life is procreative and unpredictable. Survival depends upon the ability to perceive variation, make conscious choices, and act upon them. When we, as teachers, become hardened and blind to the beauty and necessity of variation (so insistent on making our important points) and thus inhibit students' capacities and opportunities to perceive and manifest variation, then we do not serve life but its opposite. When curiosity and independence do not go the way we want them to, threatening our positions as authorities and masters of the subject (or even the entire scene), and we strike these movements down in the name of order (ego?), then we may well be blocking and poisoning the streams of consciousness and freedom, not clearing and opening them up. How much of our behavior, in the name of academic standards, is a mask for our unoriginality and stupefying intolerance of just those divergent, inconsistent, chameleon starts and shoots that make life vibrant, risky, and worth living?

Past and future are absurd dreams. We have only the immediate moment. How long, for God's sake, will we have to keep telling each other this simple fact before we believe it? To teach any kind of "basic" with the idea of getting "back" to something better is to ignore the prime, crucial reality of right now, in favor of an obvious illusion. Are we psychotic, or just stupid? (At this point I'd like to welcome all of you who are grumbling or cursing that I am the stupid psychotic, don't know what I'm talking about out in left field, oblivious to the exigencies of practical schooling, etc. I can appreciate the criticism, and recognize its bases in fact. I admit to the same dullnesses and spiritual paralyses; perhaps I feel them more acutely because I am more subject to them. But I can't justify defending my own repressive, reactionary, watch-fiend rigidities just because they're mine, especially when other people are being involuntarily subjected to them, en force, 180 days a year -- can you?)

Survival demands that we break through the insulating, numbing fog of blind self-certitude. The choice -- between open-ended extension of the possibilities of life, and mechanical, dictatorial closure of those unique possibilities -- is inherent to every situation. I don't deny that it is sometimes necessary and right to, in the interests of progress, retreat; and to sometimes constrict, or narrow concentration, so that liberating energy may be built up and channelled. But that doesn't mean adopting rigid policies of regression and restriction that deny students education (investigation) into their own thoughts, feelings, values, languages, and creative impulses. That anyone can have read and supposedly understood anything of Shakespeare, Blake, Shelley, Whitman, Steinbeck, Faulkner, Donne or Pound and still think that education is a matter of mechanical competency and blind socialization only further evinces the degree of mindless impotence our society has "attained" even among so-called "humanistically enlightened educators."

We have a basic responsibility to encourage as wide an array of vision and choice for our students as our strength and stamina will allow. In order to do this some of us may have to stop teaching particular subject matter and start being, within the context of the subject -- generating, sustaining, and participating equally in a richer experience and comprehension of that situation we're all presently involved in, which is simply life in its infinite potential and endless credibility. The main thing is that we learn and teach how to unlock and explore the vitality and freedom present in each moment -- not condemn and repress it.

USING THE POWER OF COMPARISON FOR TEACHING THE POWER OF LANGUAGE

by
Geraldine E. LaRocque

Folklore says comparisons are odious, but it is my thesis that comparisons are educational; I tend to think Thomas Fuller was closer to the mark when he wrote that "Nothing is good or bad but by comparison."[1] For example, how does one decide that a piece of literature is a masterpiece--is it not by comparison with other, lesser pieces of literature? If one sees only the best, how does one understand what makes it the best?

Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys seems special to the inexperienced reader because she/he has read few other books with which to compare them. After the young person has read a number of series books, he/she can compare them with each other and see that they are very much alike; in fact, the reader can predict how the next book in the series will turn out before reading it.

At this point, the young person will turn to a different kind of book, perhaps a recent adolescent novel by John Tunis, the ending of which he cannot guess; and he/she will see that in comparison with the series book the latter is a more realistic portrayal of the world. The reader may think, "This hero faces the same type of problems that I do and is limited, as I am, by certain constraints in the environment." As young adults read more widely, they have more referents for their comparisons; and, as a result, their appraisals of books become more sophisticated.

The same is true for all learning; the first stage play that one sees performed by one's peers in high school seems the epitome of excellence until one has seen a college-produced drama, which, in its turn, appears to be espcially fine until one compares it to a Guthrie Theater offering. After one has seen a play like ROMEO AND JULIET performed by several companies, one's understanding is enhanced by the multiple comparisons of the productions' acting, sets, interpretations, costumes, etc. The learner who is developing taste follows the same procedure in all the arts--painting, sculpture, music, dance, and in writing and literature with their special emphasis on language.

The power of comparison for teaching the power of language cannot be underestimated in helping students learn to discriminate more rigorously. One could, as many teachers do, <u>tell</u> students that of the following three translations of CYRANO DE BERGERAC, the one by Brian Hooker is best because it captures the romantic quality of the original.[2] Many students could regurgitate that assessment of the translations, receive an <u>A</u> on an exam, but still have no deeply felt understanding of the power of Hooker's language. However, a comparison of the language used in three translations of a portion of the famous balcony speech would make it possible for them to "experience" the differences in the use of language as well as the resulting differences in the power of expression.

CYRANO DE BERGERAC, Brian Hooker translation

Roxanne: What words will you?

Cyrano: All those, all those, all those
That blossom in my heart, I'll fling to you--
Armfuls of loose bloom! Love, I love beyond
Breath, beyond reason, beyond love's own power
Of loving!

CYRANO DE BERGERAC, Howard Thayer Kingsbury translation

Roxanne: If to us two this moment now has come,
What words will you speak to me?

Cyrano:
Every word
That rises to my lips. I'll cast them all
Before you in a heap, with no arrangement--
I love you--I am smothered--I am mad--
I love you--I am faint--It is too much;

CYRANO DE BERGERAC, translated by Helen Dole

Cyrano: All those, all those, all those which come to me,
I am going to throw you in a bunch, without arranging
them in a bouquet. I love you, I am stifling, I love
thee, I am mad, I can say no more, it is too much;

In class a teacher would, no doubt, wish to use longer passages but even these short excerpts will illustrate the point. When asked to compare the language of Dole, Kingsbury, and Hooker, high school sophomores have no trouble in seeing that Dole's terms such as "come to me," "throw," "without arranging in a bouquet," are more generic and less specific than Kingsbury's "every word that rises to my lips," "cast," and "heap with no arrangement." But, on the other hand, Hooker's language is, in comparison, more precise, metaphoric, and picture-making--words that "blossom in my heart," "fling," "armfuls of loose bloom."

Students also notice the connotations of words which add to or subtract from their power; "throwing" is more suitable to a sports theme than to the romantic subject of the Cyrano balcony scene. Not much better is "cast"; but the use of "fling" with its additional suggestion of arc and grace adds to the romance. Also obvious are the differences between "stifling," "smothered," and loving "beyond breath."

Students reading the same excerpts aloud might be asked to listen for harsh and liquid sounds which lessen or enhance the power of the language. "Bunch," "bouquet," and "heap" with their harsh sounds contrast with the romantic and liquid l's, m's and oo's of the Hooker translation. And no high school girl will miss the difference between being "loved beyond reason" and being loved because "I am mad."

Another interesting translation to compare with Hooker's is Anthony Burgess's. Both contain powerful language, but the power of Burgess's language lies in its somewhat sinister view of love and its lush description. Where Hooker says, ". . . and I can feel, / All the way down along these jasmine branches, / Whether you will or no, the passion of you / Trembling . . . ," Burgess translates, ". . . and the passion of that trembling weaves / A spider-filament that seeks me now." Hooker describes the atmosphere of the balcony scene with the words, "Can you feel / My soul, there in the darkness, breathe on you?"; Burgess with these, "Do you sense / My heart rising toward you in this intense / Stillness, whose perfumed velvet laps in close?"

Some teachers may even want to bring in Edmond Rostand's original French so that French students can begin to understand the problems of translation when they discover that both the Dole and Kingsbury translations are closer to the original and are more literal than the Hooker and Burgess. But no matter what the level of the class, teachers can find material for comparison at that class's level of comprehension.

After experience with this type of analysis in class, students will have the beginnings of a language background to which new language samples can be compared, and they will also have questions with which to initiate the process of comparison. Such students can generate answers for themselves and will not have to rely on others' authority or opinions.

Two or more versions of a familiar Bible story can underscore the importance of language. The power of the 17th Century English poetry and the power of familiarity and tradition make the King James translation of the birth of Christ, Luke 2, Verses 6-14, a strong statement; but perhaps the clarity of meaning in Reverend Richard F. Rowley's adaptation, with its blending of several translations, makes a more vigorous statement for the inexperienced reader. Students may feel that a Biblical passage which is not familiar to them, as Luke 2 may be, gains in depth by being read in several versions since each use of language adds uniquely to the power of the passage.

Luke 2, Verses 6-14, King James translation

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Luke 2, Verses 6-14, Reverend Richard F. Rowley's adaptation[3]

And while they were there the time came for her baby to be born, and she gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped Him in a blanket and put Him to rest in the place where the cattle had their food because there was no room for them in the inn.

In that same country-side were shepherds out in the open field guarding their flocks of sheep. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood by them, and the splendor of the Lord blazed round them and they were seized with fear.

But the angel reassured them, saying, "Stop being afraid! I bring you the most joyful news ever announced, and it is for everyone! Today in the city of David a deliverer has been born to you--the Messiah, the Lord. This is the sign by which you are to know him. You will find a baby wrapped up, and lying in a manger."

Suddenly the angel was joined by a vast host of others--the armies of heaven--praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased."

Students can discuss the differences between the two versions and the advantages of each. Especially interesting is the considerable difference in meaning in the two versions of the last verse. Consider also these three other translations of that verse:

Luke 2:14, Revised Standard

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased."[4]

Luke 2:14, Phillips Modern English

"Glory to God in the highest Heaven! Peace upon earth among men of goodwill!"

Luke 2:14, New English Bible

"Glory to God in highest heaven
And on earth his peace for men on whom his favour rests."[5]

Following the same procedure as before, students can compare and contrast, with the teacher's help, the following two versions of the penultimate paragraph of Lincoln's first inaugural address. According to William Safire, the first version was suggested by William Seward, Secretary of State.

"I close. We are not, we must not be, aliens or enemies, but fellow countrymen and brethren. Although passion has strained our bonds of affection too hardly, they must not, I am sure they will not, be broken. They mystic chords which, proceeding from so many battlefields and so many patriot graves, pass through all the hearts and all hearths in this broad continent of ours, will yet again harmonize in their ancient music when breathed upon by the guardian angel of the nation."

Lincoln accepted Seward's idea of seeking to evoke the sentimental ties that could help bind the nation together, and he used Seward's musical metaphor as well. But he rewrote the suggested passage, lifting it from oratory to poetry:

"I loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."[6]

If you believe that these lessons are too difficult for your students, start with something simpler like Emily Dickinson's poem about the bee:

Pedigree

The pedigree of honey
Does not concern the bee
A clover, any time, to him
Is aristocracy.

Rewrite it so it reads:

Quality

The quality of honey
Does not affect the bee;
A flower, any time, to him
is high society.

Now have your students compare your less effective words with Dickinson's, although they should not know as they begin who wrote either selection. Why is Dickinson's choice of words better? Note that "pedigree" and "aristocrat" fit the subject matter of creating honey better than "quality" and "high society." Also the connotations are different, the latter two being less appropriate. "Concern" and "affect" have different meanings resulting in a subtle difference in the verse.

You can rewrite any poem or paragraph that you think is within the understanding of the class with which you wish to use it.[7] Students themselves can take a dull passage of their own composing and rewrite it trying to use the principles they have learned from comparing various passages. They can start with such simple exercises as substituting for "walked" in the sentence, "He walked into the room," all the picture-making words they can think of that actually tell how he walked into the room, e.g., limped, strolled, strutted, etc.

Students who cannot appreciate the power of the metaphoric language in Hooker's translation of CYRANO DE BERGERAC may be able to see that by comparing life to baseball, one enlivens the language. Instead of saying that someone

was a failure, we say he struck out. Espy quotes a list of such expressions that John O. Herbold II used in VERBATIM, a language quarterly:

1. He was born with two strikes against him.
2. He couldn't get to first base with that girl.
3. He sure threw me a curve that time.
4. I'll take a rain check on it.
5. He went to bat for me.
6. I liked him right off the bat.
7. He was way out in left field on that one.
8. He's a foul ball.
9. I think you're off base on that.
10. It was a smash hit.
11. Let's take a seventh-inning stretch.
12. I hope to touch all the bases on this report.
13. Could you pinch-hit for me?
14. He doesn't even know who's on first.
15. I just call 'em as I see 'em.
16. He's only a bush-leaguer.
17. Major League all the way.
18. We'll hit 'em where they ain't.
19. He was safe a mile.
20. He has a lot on the ball.
21. He really dropped the ball that time.
22. We'll rally in the ninth.
23. No game's ever over until the last man's out.[8]

Semantics is another aspect of language that can be taught by comparison. Examples that one can rewrite are found every day in the letters-to-the-editor and editorial sections of most newspapers; often one can find two opposing views that use language effectively, thereby eliminating the necessity for rewriting in order to point up semantic differences. Follow-up writing assignments can ask students to rewrite a specific piece for a different audience, e.g., if an anti-abortion article or editorial has been designed to appeal to supporters of ERA, how could it be rewritten to appeal to those who do not support ERA?

William Safire and other writers often deal creatively with language in modern publications; in the following excerpt, Safire builds his own semantic comparison in order to come to an interesting conclusion about what he calls an "ugly" word.

Think Thick

> A verb that recently entered the lexicon of Middle East negotiations is, in Hebrew, "ibui," translated in English as "thicken." When Israelis are sent to West Bank settlements to increase population density without increasing geographic size, that's called "thickening."
>
> It's an ugly word: plots thicken when conspiracies grow; midriffs thicken when diets are unsuccessful. Since it is hard enough to explain the entire settlements policy to the State Department, why did the Israeli translators choose such a word?

> Put yourself in the translator's shoes. "Ibui" could be translated as "enrich"--that's no good. Or as "strengthen," as when a bouillon cube is added to soup stock--but that would connote additional military strength. "Broaden" and "widen" are not accurate, and would give the impression that the settlements were spilling out into more land. "Deepen"? They're not burrowing underground.
>
> If such a verb as "densify" existed, it would apply--but this is hardly the time to make up new verbs. "Concentrate" leaps to mind, and as quickly leaps out--"concentration" is not a welcome word for an Israeli camp. In a case like that, Israeli translators must have been tempted to fudge the entire construction: Instead of saying "thicken the settlements," they could have called it a plan "to send more people to live within existing settlement borders." But then Israel would have risked a general adoption of "strengthen," only partially accurate and certainly warlike.
>
> Which takes us back to "thicken"; sometimes you have to make do with an ugly word.[9]

A final comparison technique that can be used to illuminate language is to discuss words themselves and how they have changed over time. Compare the original meaning of a word with its present-day meaning. By what process did it acquire the meaning it has today? An example from one of Sidney Harris's columns is illuminating:

> To many people, the study of words seems a remote and academic pastime, bearing little relation to the real world. Actually, however, it is in words and their changing use that we find important clues to the social and psychological drifts of the society.
>
> For instance, what do all the following words have in common: bawd, concubine, coquette, courtesan, hag, harlot, hoyden, shrew, termagant, wench and witch?
>
> Of course, they are all demeaning words for women, and today are used only in reference to women. But the really interesting thing about them--and many more--is that originally they were used to denote either sex.
>
> Over the last few centuries, however, these words became pejorative and were used only for women--which indicates how male chauvinism in the real world translated itself into the verbal downgrading of the opposite sex.
>
> Bawds, concubines, coquettes, courtesans, and harlots initially referred to both men and women of loose sexual practices. Chaucer, Wycliffe, Beaumont and Fletcher, Shakespeare and countless other writers use these terms interchangeably for either sex. Then they suddenly die out as words applying to men, and become "feminine" only.[10]

Maybe students know of present-day words, the meanings of which are changing, e.g., when does "bad" really mean "good"?

If your students are able to use the OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY, so much the better. If not, they can use such fascinating etymological books as Willard Espy's O THOU IMPROPER, THOU UNCOMMON NOUN (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc.,

1978), Charles E. Funk's THEREBY HANGS A TALE (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), or Bill Severn's PEOPLE WORDS (New York: Ives Washburn, Inc., 1966). For the student already hooked on words, POPLOLLIES AND BELLIBONES by Susan Sperling (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1977) will contribute a good deal of fun to the study of language, and any of Sydney J. Harris's columns entitled "Antics and Semantics" will stimulate discussion. These columns are found in all of his books and deal with such semantic material as "Our government issues "information"; your government issues "publicity"; their government issues "propaganda."[11]

Because life teaches by comparison, perhaps we ought to use life's method more often in the classroom. Comparison keeps the discussion of language from becoming too abstract for true understanding, and it has all the advantages of utilizing Piaget's concrete level to help students "experience," not "be told" what the strength of a particular construction or selection is.

NOTES

[1]Thomas Fuller, M.D., GNOMOLOGIA (1732), 3966, as quoted in Rheda Thomas Tripp (comp.), THE INTERNATIONAL THESAURUS OF QUOTATIONS (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1970), p. 152.

[2]Parts of the following discussion of CYRANO are based on sections of the author's article, "English Curriculum: Process or Product," ENGLISH JOURNAL, September, 1971, pp. 782-786.

[3]Reverend Richard F. Rowley, Northminster Presbyterian Church, 2450 East Fort Lowell Road, Tucson, Arizona 85719.

[4]Other ancient authorities read "peace, good will among men," THE NEW TESTAMENT IN FOUR VERSIONS: KING JAMES, REVISED STANDARD, PHILLIPS MODERN ENGLISH, NEW ENGLISH BIBLE. CHRISTIANITY TODAY EDITION (New York: Iversen Ford Associates, 1963), p. 166.

[5]THE NEW TESTAMENT IN FOUR VERSIONS, p. 166 f.

[6]William Safire, "Political Word Watch," NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE, November 19, 1978, p. 94-96.

[7]See Stephen Dunning, TEACHING LITERATURE TO ADOLESCENTS (New York: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1975), p. 80, for another example of comparison with poetry using Robert Francis' "Apple Peeler."

[8]Willard R. Espy, O THOU IMPROPER, THOU UNCOMMON NOUN (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1978), p. 212f.

[9]William Safire, "The Invincibles," NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE, February 25, 1979, p. 9.

[10]Sydney Harris, THE BEST OF SYDNEY J. HARRIS (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1975), p. 296f.

[11]Harris, p. 304.

TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: EXTENDING VIDEOTAPING THROUGH CREATIVE DRAMA

by
Daniel Tutolo
and
JoAnne Martin-Reynolds

During the past two decades, videotaping techniques have had a singularly narrow purpose in educational circles--as feedback in preservice and inservice teacher education programs in fostering self-assessment skills.[1] Playback has made the job of teachers, supervisors, and perhaps administrators a little less difficult as they try to assess degrees of strengths and weaknesses in teaching performance. As yet, the positive aspects of such assessment methods seem to outweigh some inherent difficulties in the self-confrontation process,[2] with the end result being widespread usage of videotaping techniques at all levels of education.

In view of this very significant use of videotaping processes, is it worth our while to consider new directions which might be explored in order to expand our use of this valuable instructional medium? We believe it is. In fact, we would like to suggest that video playback has a unique but largely untapped potential for varying instructional strategies, especially in the area of creative dramatics in the elementary school.

As children experience dramatic play, dramatization of literature, pantomiming, role playing, puppetry, choral speaking and children's theatre, they could be easily encouraged to extend these experiences through the medium of video tape. For young children especially, the joys of watching oneself on T.V. can be exhilerating. Let's consider some specifics for enriching the language program.

INFORMAL DRAMATICS

Dramatic Play

Dramatic play evokes natural body movement and encourages rhythmic responses. These largely unstructured activities allow children to express themselves freely in an uninhibited fashion. The impact of experiencing oneself personally involved in dramatic play gives an added dimension of meaningful involvement for each child. Seeing oneself on video playback can enhance the creative spark associated with dramatic play. The value of immediate playback is self-evident. No time is needed for film development, locating projection equipment, etc.

Creative Rhythm

Rhythmic response to music can also develop natural body movements. Many records are available which change from slow to fast tempo sharpening the listening skills of the children. Children enjoy these activities and learn awareness of the space needs of others. No formal instruction is necessary and rarely do children fail to respect the needs of others.

Through videotaping children would not only sense but see the creative rhythms of each musical selection in which they are uniquely involved in keeping the tempo.

Dramatization of Literature

From personal experience in dramatic play, children move to acting out literary selections. These can be stories read or told to the children for either mode is appropriate. Mother Goose rhymes and other enduring folk and fairy tales provide opportunities for personal interpretation of well known characters. Children can dramatize some action or happening well known to the audience. Or, volunteers can assume roles extemporaneously and the video playback can be followed by a "what happened there" discussion. With these popular activities, the video playback serves to prolong attention and permit longer periods of discussion.

A SENSE OF AUDIENCE DEVELOPS

Pantomiming

In pantomime the strength of the message must be carried by kinesics or body language. Gestures, shrugs, smiles, arm signals, etc. all transmit ideas and emotions to the audience. Security of body control and freedom from embarrassment are essential facets of this dramatic encounter. This ancient form of art is always popular with children. Many shy children who find oral activities in front of a group distressing flourish through the medium of mime. Total silence is required and props are only occasionally permitted. The goal is an easy-to-identify mime which the audience will thoroughly enjoy.

A split-screen technique provides the opportunity to view audience reaction and participants' movements simultaneously. This valuable addition is not without its problems however. Extra equipment including a second camera for recording are needed.

Role Playing or Simulation

Role playing or simulation provides an opportunity for two or more children to take the role of others, either adult or children. In the warm-up period the problem or question is clarified and participants are assigned roles. Next, the plan or general line of action is established including both a beginning and an end. This gives the participants a total gestalt or global idea of simulation. The audience is then prepared for its part which involves sharpening listening skills. After the enactment a discussion ensues where both participants and listeners are free to make comments.

Once role playing is understood by a group of children very little guidance is necessary by the teacher. Children can transfer from one role to another and the audience responds with clarifying questions and comments.

Role playing is a natural for videotaping because both the audience and the participants can assess respective performances. This is a developmental activity in which students build upon information and ideas about characters under study. Both the participants and the audience improve listening skills through positive and supportive analysis of the video playback.

Puppetry

Puppetry should begin in the primary grades but it is fun for all elementary children. As in mime, the self-conscious child often excels in this form of dramatic expression. There is a sense of security in knowing that the puppet said it "not me." If a mistake is made, "it is the puppet's not mine." Puppets can be very basic and those made by children are satisfactory.

Like all of the art forms previously discussed, puppetry can be a release from tension. This is a real service to students and teachers alike in this age so characterized by tensions. Puppetry has the power to develop the imagination for it represents the image of the real not the real itself. Puppetry is as satisfying for the audience as it is for the participants, for both attain emotional satisfaction. Individual differences are easily met through puppetry as children of all abilities can participate and make good contributions.

A collection of video tapes dealing with puppetry which is located in the library can be useful in several different respects. The video tapes can be shared within and across grade levels and can be motivators the following year when puppetry is introduced into the curriculum. If other teachers in your district are interested in sharing, a loan system analogous to pen pal communication might be established to facilitate mutual exchange of videotapes. They can also be instructional in the sense that demonstrations of puppet construction can be illustrated when children are introduced to the medium.

Choral Speaking

Choral speaking sometimes called choral reading or reading in unison is becoming popular throughout the country. It is the prepared reading or speaking of carefully selected poetry. Anthologies like THE ARBUTHNOT ANTHOLOGY OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE and periodicals such as TEACHER refer to excellent poetry for choral speaking.

Choral speaking has many values. Children enjoy learning to respond as a group to the rhythm and melody of the poem. Shy children forget their apprehensions when participating with the group. Interpretation so essential to the appreciation of poetry is enhanced. Children learn to cooperate and this cooperation can transfer to other activities. Poetry appreciation develops slowly in children. Choral speaking can help this development.

Videotaped segments of such choral speaking can be shown to parents at open house or any other time when children are not normally present. It is one thing to describe a program to parents and quite another to show representative

samples of learning activities. Choral speaking involves all of the children from a given class and there is no better way to please parents than to have them see their children in action.

Children's Theatre

Children's theatre or formal drama is drama for children where the audience is the first consideration. The success of the project is guaged by the enjoyment it gives a child audience. Polished production involves the use of a stage, memorization of lines, direction by a leader and use of scenery and costumes. The best actors are utilized while others contribute to the support functions. Publications such as PLAYS or the INSTRUCTOR are excellent sources of suitable productions for children. The chief responsibility for selection of material falls on the teacher although children may contribute to the selection process. The teacher knows the children and can fit interests and needs into an intelligent choice.

Particular care is devoted to thoroughness and often plays are selected to correlate with other topics being studied by the class. The teacher introduces the play in detail by reading the script aloud and seeking reactions. The teacher selects the actors based on ability and interest. Copies of the play are made available and small groups of children practice together. These rehearsals are held during school hours and just prior to production a dress rehearsal is held where coordination is completed.

It is at this particular stage where videotaping might be especially helpful in allowing children to develop a sense of audience reaction. Group feedback can foster a cooperative spirit whereby some of the inclination toward stiffness in such a production can be eliminated.

The most important ingredient in the success of play creation is pupil-teacher rapport.[3] With it the teacher can accomplish miracles. Without it, it is doubtful whether the program can be successful. Pupils respect the teacher who is firm, for even young children soon realize that creative dramatics must have leadership. That leadership role belongs to the teacher.

Evaluation, appraisal or assessment of creative dramatics is informal and supportive. The medium of television through videotape provides an immediate reinforcement for development of the creative powers of the young. Aesthetic appreciation is enhanced through sound and movement. The best way to encourage the social growth of children is to point to successes demonstrated through the dramatic skills. Look for the following signs of growth:[4]

1. Does the child participate freely in imaginative play?
2. Does she/he exercise self-control and facilitate cooperation?
3. Does she/he share ideas and materials?
4. Does she/he accept and fulfill responsibilities?
5. Does she/he understand central ideas and supporting details?
6. Does she/he enjoy watching children's drama?
7. Is language expanding noticeably?

Begin evaluation sessions by showing the tape to a small group of children. Point out evidence of positive behavior only. "See how Mary moves so freely."

"Watch Sam, he sits quietly and watches." "Look at Bob, see him share with Patty." "Look at Trudy, she is really enjoying herself." Ignore all evidence of unsatisfactory behavior. Do not permit negative peer remarks. Maintaining this positive attitude will be difficult at first for all apparent mistakes are clearly visible on tape. The goal is to establish and maintain a positive spirit of evaluation.

Let's be practical for a moment and consider how all this taping might be done. An initial stumbling block to such practices is, of course, availability of equipment. Does your district have such facilities? If not, consider a grant application for state funding. In Ohio, for example, availability of videotape equipment for self-evaluation has been made possible for a number of school districts by means of a Title III Adaptation Grant for Teacher Self-Assessment, with a total of 154 districts funded from 1974-1975.[5] Moreover, regional areas served by the Ohio Educational Television Foundation have recently been awarded Special Purpose Grants by the State Department of Education with which to provide matching funds based on enrollment to member schools for the purchase of instructional television equipment.[6] Teachers may thus tape telecasts for playback to fit their own schedules rather than depend upon pre-scheduled television programming.

A second major problem area might be finding someone to operate the equipment. Perhaps your school has an audio-visual expert who might have release time to provide such services. If not, check with your principal to see if she/he might be interested in implementing such a program. Does the local high school have a class dealing with radio and television techniques? Release time for such students not only gives them experience in working with videotape techniques but provides the classroom teacher with cameramen and crew who can easily handle the equipment. Perhaps you, as the classroom teacher, would be interested in doing your own taping. Becoming familiar with the equipment and its operation takes only a few practice sessions and could then be fit into your schedule as you wish.

An earlier reference to inherent difficulties in the videotape self-evaluation process leads us to a third consideration; that of dealing with possible stress resulting from self-confrontation during video feedback. Although taping experiences in language arts will certainly not approach the strong self-focus situation of the teacher self-evaluation process, there should be definite provisions made for providing positive feedback to the children involved in any taping situation. This will not only provide a means of encouraging their work with videotape, but can be an effective channel for suggesting changes in some activities. Classmates can also provide positive focus through comments about points they especially enjoyed. Immediate playback can also be used to enhance the positive impact of the activity, since purposes and feelings are still fresh in mind. At any rate, however it may be accomplished, the potential for varying instructional strategies through videotaping is indeed unique. And, as products of an electronic age, our children may respond in ways which will encourage us to further explore the potential of this instructional medium.

Videotaping can indeed enhance creative drama in the elementary school. Through its use, each teacher can enrich the language program by following these basic steps. Determine if equipment is available for use in the school district

or can be obtained. Identify those human resources available to assist in utilization of this technique. Develop an evaluation posture which is positive and supportive of creative expression. Finally, utilize the approach until children are comfortable. Remember, creative drama and language extension are inseparable.

NOTES

[1]Frances F. Fuller and Brad Manning, "Self-Confrontation Reviewed: A Conceptualization for Video Playback in Teacher Education," REVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH, 43 (Fall, 1973), 469-528.

[2]For a review of the literature, see: Martin, JoAnne J., "A Study of the Effects of a Self-Evaluation Model on the Focus Reaction of Student Teachers During Split-Screen Videotape Feedback," (Ph.D. dissertaion, Bowling Green State University, 1977), pp. 19-30.

[3]Sylvia Diane Bordan, PLAYS AS TEACHING TOOLS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. West Nyack, N.Y.: Parker Publishing Co., 1970, p. 44.

[4]Mildred R. Donaghue. THE CHILD AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (2nd). Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1975, p. 158.

[5]Carolyn Sue Hughes, "Moritz Presents Project to Illinois ASCD in Germany," OASCD NEWSLETTER, 23 (Spring, 1977), 1-2.

[6]Northwest Ohio Educational Television Foundation, "T.V. Purchase Plan," Bowling Green State University, 1977 (mimeograph).

CONTINUING COLUMN: TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

BOOK REPORTS

A Reading Workshop

Task Force Report

Last summer, approximately twenty-six junior high school teachers participated in a reading workshop sponsored by the Zanesville City Schools and Ohio University. A number of these teachers returned for five follow-up sessions that were held during the fall quarter. Each follow-up meeting emphasized a special aspect of reading instruction and was led by a central speaker from the summer workshop. James Davis, English instructor at Ohio University, led the first meeting participants in a discussion of adolescent literature, its qualities and themes, and its usefulness in motivating students to read. Dr. Davis then separated the teachers into task forces, assigned each group a topic to explore, and instructed them to be ready to share their findings with the others. Our group was assigned the topic BOOK REPORTS. We were asked to decide which students should do book reports, when book reports should be completed, and possible alternatives to the written report. The following are some of our thoughts and concerns.

WHY DO BOOK REPORTS?

Book reports should be assigned for these reasons:

1. to motivate students to read
2. to encourage students to share things they have read
3. to help students learn to find and condense the main ideas of a book
4. to provide supplementary information
5. to provide information for enrichment activities and projects
6. to give students practice in comparing ideas from a variety of sources
7. to encourage students to use the library
8. to provide a chance for students to earn occasional extra credit

WHO SHOULD DO BOOK REPORTS?

Every student should do a book report at some time. Both the reading material and the method for reporting should be tailored to the student's abilities.

WHEN TO DO BOOK REPORTS?

Every student should complete a book report at least once during the school year. Better readers should be required to complete reports more often. Older, more mature students should be required to investigate a number of books

and learn to develop their reports into well-organized papers. They should complete a major research project at least once a year.

Book reports should be assigned when the text does not provide sufficient background or information on a topic.

Book reports should be used when students exhibit a special interest in a subject and seem eager to explore it further.

WHERE TO DO BOOK REPORTS?

Book reports should be used in all areas, not just in the English and language arts class.

CONCERNS OVER TRADITIONAL BOOK REPORTS

Too often, students are assigned book reports that are completely unrelated to what is happening in class. An assigned book report should serve as an enrichment or supplementary learning experience.

Teachers should explain what they want in a book report. They should not simply pass out a reading list and instruct students to read and report on something from it.

Books that appear on a reading list should be readily available to students.

Students should help select the books they read.

There should be an established purpose for reading and reporting, and it is important for the student to understand the purpose. Even when a book report is accepted as extra credit, it is important for the teacher to take time to help find an appropriate book and then to discuss it with the student.

Not all book reports have to be written. Students should be given opportunities for creative expression.

ALTERNATIVE BOOK REPORTS

We suggest these projects be tried occasionally as alternatives to the written book report:

1. individual conferences between the student and teacher
2. book talks
3. skits based on the book
4. write a poem about the book
5. write the autobiography of the main character
6. write a letter from one minor character to another discussing the main character and his actions
7. write newspaper articles for important events in the book
8. make book jackets and book markers that illustrate the theme of the book
9. illustrate the theme with a poster or collage
10. illustrate one scene from the book in a diorama
11. make puppets and act out the story
12. plan a promotional campaign and "sell" the book to fellow students

13. plan a book fair display featuring the book
14. read a favorite paragraph to the class
15. write an interview of the main character in the book
16. write to the author of the book
17. make up crossword puzzles, word searches, or riddles that could be completed by other students who have read the book
18. discuss how the story would be different if a minor character suddenly took the lead
19. write a journal from the point of view of one of the characters in the book
20. bring in a special article important to the story and explain its significance

Task Force Members

Rebecca Abele, Grover Cleveland Junior High
Bob Bednarczuk, Grover Cleveland Junior High
Steve Flowers, Zanesville High School
Ruth Sharrer, Grover Cleveland Junior High
Sue Holt, recorder, Grover Cleveland Junior High

A STUDENT'S VIEW OF THE PROFESSION

Et tu, English Teacher?
A Look at Attitudes Toward Text Selection in American Schools, 1840 - 1978

by
Tina M. Curby

Should we abandon the classics? Should we discard our long-cherished texts of JULIUS CAESAR and PARADISE LOST? As English teachers--or future English teachers--we need to reassess the materials we're using in the classroom and decide which ones are most appropriate for our students today. An examination of the textbooks that English teachers have utilized from the subject's earliest days until the present reveals a definite struggle for existence among the so-called "classics."

Throughout our nation's history--and especially during the past century--the subject of English has changed significantly. Presumably, the classroom materials, the texts, and even the personal libraries of English teachers have also been altered.

From Colonial days until the Civil War, school children learned to read and spell from books designed for religious instruction and festering patriotism. Perhaps a schoolmaster spent leisurely evenings reading early English classics from his own library, but for class it was strictly the NEW ENGLAND PRIMER, Webster's BLUE-BACKED SPELLER, and McGuffey's readers. In the late 1840's, with the popularization of literary history, the teacher began to bring his literature into the classroom. Unfortunately, his students were not allowed to read it. Their literary history course entailed memorizing historical and biographical facts about Milton--for "mental discipline"--but reading and enjoying his works was unheard of.

During the years between 1865 and the turn of the century, English literature became quite fashionable, especially in the colleges. Harvard University led the way: in 1807, a Shakespeare text offered for sale at Harvard had been purchased by over half the students. Fifty years later, Francis J. Child, a rhetoric professor, taught an elective course there on Shakespeare, Milton, and Chaucer. Robert Grant, one of Child's students, earned the first American Ph.D. in English literature at Harvard in 1876. W.J. Rolfe, the nation's first high school English teacher, wrote several contributions to school libraries including two forty-volume editions of Shakespeare. His 1867 annotated edition of JULIUS CAESAR was used by many teachers. Shakespeare's works were also an important part of the uniform lists that began developing toward the end of the century, and finally, annotated texts of all the "listed" books became popular. When in 1892 the "Committee of Ten" and the National Conference recognized

English as a respectable subject, they also mentioned literature as an important part of that subject.

The early 1900's brought protests against the Uniform Lists, the founding of NCTE, and a "School for the People." Numerous scholars agreed with William Rolfe's statement that "Far more good will come, even to the mind, by foolishly enjoying Shakespeare than by learnedly parsing him," and emphasis was placed on each literary work as a whole, with the ideas and values it taught. Eastman's THE ENJOYMENT OF POETRY (1913) also scolded teachers for over-analyzing works. Yet, many instructors argued that "learnedly parsing" Shakespeare was necessary for enjoying him.

In any case, the needs of each child were taken into consideration more than before, and English teachers began to care about holding their students' interests in class. Some contemporary works found their way into the curriculum, and "vocational" English was taught for the non-college-bound student, but JULIUS CAESAR still held a prominent place on the English teacher's shelf (and in his heart, sigh).

Progressive education originated in 1917 when the National Joint Council on English published its report, REORGANIZATION OF ENGLISH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, formally determining that high school curriculum should involve not only preparation for college but "preparation for life." Initially, the same texts were utilized in classrooms, but different purposes cited. When tenth graders studied JULIUS CAESAR and THE MERCHANT OF VENICE, they were learning to deal with the moral questions of right and wrong. As educators proceeded into the 20's and 30's however, even JULIUS CAESAR must have been tucked away up in an old cabinet in many classrooms. Science, with its stress on objective measurement, insisted upon "functional" curriculums. World War I had persuaded many people that basic reading, writing, and speaking skills were more important than enjoying Shakespeare.

With the new trend in placing focus on each individual, teachers were convinced that students should read only what interested them. Originally, this concept implied that teachers would utilize student interests as a starting point, then gradually lead them back into the classics; however, most lost sight of the goal and student interest reigned. Several attempts were made to formulate a curriculum providing experience through literature; the goal of literature teachers was no longer moral instruction, but identification with real life. Modern works including many by American authors, were approved of and added to the school shelves and anthologies began their rise in popularity.

The post-war days of the 40's and 50's brought new issues into the schools, and with them came new areas of reading materials. Because the Depression years prompted fewer students to drop out of school, high schools were faced with great numbers of students who were not college bound. Education leaders met this challenge with an increased focus on language and communication skills and an extreme emphasis on dealing with adolescent problems. "Life adjustment" education transformed English literature into psychological studies. Teachers endeavored to teach true-to-life stories, including plots dealing with family life and the generation gap. Some brave classes attempted to bring racial

problems into open discussion. Initial attempts to teach modern books were blocked by censorship, but soon adolescent novels such as THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK of THE CATCHER IN THE RYE found their way into many schools. Before long the market became flooded with formula-plot stories about young people. Magazines even became popular in-class reading material, and while students enjoyed stories from ATLANTIC MONTHLY and THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, JULIUS CAESAR sat on a dusty shelf with Milton's works, feeling very ignored. Those classics brought into the schools were simplified and shortened in the interest of easier reading.

In the 1950's, the progressive era came to a sudden halt. Adler's HOW TO READ A BOOK (1940) and Flesch's WHY JOHNNY CAN'T READ (1953) contributed to the emerging anti-progressive thought, but the 1957 Russian launching of Sputnik was the last straw. The American public began to ask "What's wrong with American schools?" Government officials and others answered: Progressivism. The National Defense Education Act was passed and curriculums were narrowed, giving prominance to math and science. English as a discipline began to lose importance in this new technological age until the NDEA was finally broadened to provide federal funds for English. During the post-Sputnik era, many high schools revived their old tracking systems and initiated special programs exclusively for college-bound students. Colleges and universities became involved in helping reform high school curriculums and English teachers faced many challenges. Literary values--not student desires--were to be considered of prime importance when selecting materials to read and study in class. Several dusty copies of JULIUS CAESAR were promptly brought down off the shelves again. Modern works tried to battle their way into the classrooms, but many failed because of strict censorship.

Today, English instruction involves a mixture of many teaching philosophies from the past. One school of thought stresses performance and evidence of performance, using behavioral objectives. Such an emphasis causes difficulties for an English teacher who wants to teach creative writing or an appreciation for great literature. Some educators follow the British model, emphasizing the personal growth of each child, with extensive use of drama and other less traditional teaching methods. And, of course, those disadvantaged American inner-city schools which, according to many, house and educate ever increasing numbers of children who are receiving low amounts of financial support and quality materials in over-crowded classrooms, continue to be widespread. Many educators and students working in all of these areas claim that "relevance" in teaching needs to be a major goal. But what is relevant to teaching English?

Realizing that the next steps in this process will be taken, in part, by me, I see I have some huge decisions to make. Teaching English no longer looks as easy to me as it did when I was a junior and senior high school student. I know now that I cannot just walk into a classroom and say simply, "During the first semester we're going to learn the material in this grammar book, and during the second semester we're going to read this literature book."

Can I--like the Progressives--take into account the individual needs and interests of my students, and still teach the quality literature and basic language skills that I want them to know? I believe I can. "Back to Basics" will probably remain fashionable in the near future, but perhaps we teachers can exact some degree of freedom in choosing the <u>methods</u> we use to teach the

basics. Repeated grammar drills and sentence diagrams may not be the most effective way to learn proper language usage. Extensive student writing has been proven very effective in teaching grammar, but many instructors complain that numerous writing assignments are impractical, since they require too much time to grade. Perhaps when students are asked to write for the purpose of learning better self-expression, creativity, and gradually, proper sentence structure, grades are unnecessary. I would like to use writing frequently and arrange to discuss each students work with him in a positive manner--helping him to discover his strengths and weaknesses--before placing any emphasis on letter grades.

Perhaps I could start students writing by focusing on the basics of plot, setting, and characterization in their favorite comic book or television show. After discovering a framework from which to work they may acquire an appetite to know more, and to read more. They might even have an easier time digesting the "classics." Drama and role playing from literature, television, and real life situations could also be important in learning language and communication skills.

During the coming years I believe television, recordings, movie theatres, and live drama will all increase in importance and popularity with young people. Rather than ignore these sources, insisting that our old-fashioned literature texts are the only appropriate teaching tools, we need to admit that these media are here to stay and we English teachers may as well utilize them in our classes. As David England suggests in a recent ENGLISH JOURNAL article ("Television and the English Teacher," September 1978), we can actively work to improve both what is viewed on television and how it is viewed. Hopefully, students can be taught to view television (and read books) in a more discriminating and critical manner.

And how will I select the books to read and teach and recommend in my classes? First, I need to work on increasing my own reading and my knowledge of both classic and contemporary works. I should explore the current best-sellers and attempt to judge their literary values and interest levels, and keep some type of records of works I've read for future reference. New adolescent novels are continually being written and English teachers must keep abreast of these works also if they are going to hold the interest of today's student.

What about that old favorite among English teachers for the past one hundred years? In my excitement over modern books and ideas, will I leave JULIUS CAESAR on the dusty shelf? No, Caesar, I won't abandon you; the value of great literature does <u>not</u> decrease with age. But neither will I turn my back on the fresher, less traditional resources available for teaching English; newness does not automatically imply a lack of value, and we must respond to pupils' demands for relevant learning materials. Perhaps students and teachers can work together in discovering the universal ideas and themes in literature from all over the world and all periods in time. I hope to be able to determine my goals, distinguish my students' needs, and choose my own teaching materials--from among the old <u>and</u> the new.

PROFESSIONAL

A REPORT ON THE SPRING SOCTE CONFERENCE
Newark, Ohio
April 21, 1979

As spring gloriously presented itself in budding treas and near- 80 degree temperatures, approximately 175 language arts educators met on the campus of Newark Senior High School for the Spring Conference of the Southeastern Ohio Council of Teachers of English. Those in attendance gathered to hear presentations on "Reading and Teaching Literature," the conference theme.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Carolyn Burke of Indiana University, spoke on "Content and Comprehending: A Setting for Reading." She stressed that the relationship between author and reader is critical if comprehension is to occur. The author must take into consideration the amount of non-visual information a reader has before he attempts to read print and comprehend it. And teachers, as facilitators of the reading process, should provide settings to bridge gaps students may have as they approach a reading situation. Dr. Burke cited several examples of how teachers can meet a student's individual needs and help him experience success in reading.

Following Dr. Burke's address, Hazel Davis presided at the business meeting of SOCTE. Routine business was transacted and a special memorial to Diane Henry was presented to the assistant principal of Jackson Senior High School.

After the day's luncheon, catered by Neal Cavanaugh, Dr. Alexis Levitin of Denison University spoke on "Pulling the Strings: The Artist as Manipulator." He pointed out the problems of the artist as a manipulator, i.e. the moral dangers inherent when a writer handles people as things, taking away their identity as human beings. Citing Shakespeare as an example, Dr. Levitin showed that on three levels the artist "manipulates." First, the artist manipulates his audience, moving them, stirring their emotions. Second, the artist can manipulate his fellow man. This is a danger for the artist, as he can take over a human being, take that individual's experience and convert it into something useful for the artist. It is in this way that the artist runs the risk of violating the soul of man. Thirdly, the artist manipulates characters. In all of Shakespeare's plays there is at least one character who manipulates others in the play, either for goodness or for evil. Dr. Levitin cited various characters and plays and the types of manipulation. But the artist can only manipulate to a certain extent. Shakespeare recognized this, Dr. Levitin maintained, as evidenced in the loose ends in the plays--the things that didn't seem to fit into a neat outcome.

In the afternoon, representatives from language arts departments of local schools, Ohio State University, Denison University, Ohio University, and Marietta College conducted a total of 28 mini-sessions on topics dealing with teaching reading and literature across the levels (K through college). A broad range of topics offered conference participants fresh ideas on dealing with reading and literature, as well as a forum for discussion.

Of special interest were the NCTE book exhibit and a special Book Fair featuring hundreds of titles for pleasure reading. In addition, a representative of Silver-Burdett Company exhibited educational materials.

The day's success stemmed from many hours of organization and work by a committee from the Newark Organization of Teachers of English (NOTE), chaired by Karolyn Burkett. All involved displayed dedication typical of professionals who are interested in fostering continuing education for the English language arts teacher.

* * * * *

MINUTES OF THE SOCTE ANNUAL MEETING

The business session of SOCTE was held at the spring conference at Newark High School, Newark, Ohio, on April 21. The meeting was called to order by Hazel Davis. The minutes of the Fall, 1978 Conference were read by the secretary.

George Turner presented the treasurer's report as follows:

Balance, March 1, 1979		$1899.42
Receipts		12.00
Expenditures		785.23
O.U. English Dept.	631.68	
O.U. Inn	50.55	
Hazel Davis (coffee)	6.00	
Roy Beadling (memorial portrait)	97.00	
Balance, April 21, 1979		$1126.19

The FOCUS account is depleted at this time. The savings balance is $315.56.

Hazel Davis introduced June Berkley, secretary-elect of OCTELA as well as George Ware. George spoke concerning the OCTELA meeting on October 12 and 13 in Zanesville. An affiliate-leadership conference will be held as a pre-conference activity on October 11.

The NCTE liasion, Bob Bednarczuk, thanked the NOTE group for taking care of the book exhibit for today.

Ruth Sharrer reported membership prior to today's meeting at 222. She received 10 renewals and 10 new members today.

Jim Davis gave the FOCUS report. Contributions can still be used from the local region. The Winter 1980 issue theme will be "Language Instruction: What Works and Why." He introduced Jim Gorman who has been doing much of the work on FOCUS for the past few months.

Jim Davis discussed the proposed constitutional changes. These will be voted on at the fall meeting. Copies of the current constitution as well as the revised proposals were distributed to those attending. Any suggestions for inclusion should be directed to the committee: Mary Turner, Ruth Sharrer, Sue Holt.

George Turner made the presentation of the Diane K. Henry memorial gift to Jackson High School. He introduced members of Diane's family including her aunt, Anna Nail; her brother Bill Henry and his wife; and her sister Mrs. Mark Abels and her husband. He also introduced Mary Jean Rider, a member of the JHS English faculty and Assistant Principal Slater and his wife. Mr. Slater accepted the portrait in behalf of JHS. He responded by expressing thanks and reporting that the Diane K. Henry Memorial Fund had been established at Jackson High School for the purchase of books. The portrait will be placed in the library with the memorial collection.

Sue Holt read the nominating report as follows:

President: Hazel Davis -- Federal Hocking High School
Vice President: George Turner -- Zanesville High School
Secretary: Sally Hale -- Putnam Elementary School, Marietta
Treasurer: Judy Kieffer -- Roosevelt Jr. High School, Zanesville

Mary Turner moved that the nominations be elected. Marye Keslar seconded, voted and carried.

The Fall 1979 meeting will be held in Zanesville in conjunction with OCTELA. Hazel asked for suggestions for location of the Spring 1980 meeting.

Jim Davis discussed the provision of constitutional revision concerning President-elect. He moved that the title of the office for this year be Vice President and President-elect. Seconded by Judy Kieffer, voted and carried.

The meeting was adjourned for lunch. The luncheon speaker was Dr. Alexis Leviton of Denison University speaking on "Pulling the Strings: The Artist as Manipulator." The group then separated for their choice of the 28 mini-sessions. Two sessions were held. Those attending also enjoyed the book fair set up by the NHS English Department.

--from Sally Hale

* * * * *

RESPONSES TO THE BASIC MOVEMENT

Two projects have been undertaken at the Zanesville Campus of Ohio University this year which rise out of the increased interest in the recent past concerning written expression.

Michael Abrams, Assistant Professor of Psychology, requested student proctoring help during the Winter Quarter to aid him in being able to assign more written work and give increased individual attention to students. His comments about his Winter Quarter Child Psychology class give a reflection of

the things which this experiment was able to accomplish. "This course involved a great deal of writing on the part of the student (and a great deal of grading on my part). Indeed, not including the essay exams, the student who chose to do everything possible in the course handed in 20 written pieces of work, an average of one per class, in addition to giving an oral presentation of about 45 minutes. (The mean number of papers handed in was 15.3). Including the 5 essay exams, a trememdous amount of marking needed to be done in this course."

Because of the favorable results the first time, Dr. Abrams was given permission to continue the procedure for the Spring Quarter as well.

In the English area, John Kelbley, Associate Professor, developed a questionnaire which went to his colleagues in other disciplines on the campus. He asked for comments on the reading and writing abilities of the students in each course, kinds of writing formats used, and whether analysis, argument, evaluation, or some other method was most stressed in the various formats used. John was able to gather information, as well, on total number of words written per quarter, weight given to composition skills in grading, and number of times per week students write in each class. Nineteen out of twenty-three professors responded to John's questionnaire. Nearly half submitted examples of student writing from their courses. A third indicated they would require more writing if not for the time involved in reading the extra papers.

--from George Ware
OSU--Zanesville

* * * * *

Marietta City Schools have always emphasized the basic skills. The district's Philosophy of Education and Course of Study reflects a focus of concern on developing basics, meeting individual needs, and reaching potentials. A look at the three R's in our curriculum, the reading program is one of sequential levels of basic reading skills development, pre and post tested for mastery. In math, use of a teaching system showing levels of introduction, reteaching, mastery, and review are maintained on each child, a means of a quick individual assessment of basic skills. In handwriting, instruction begins with basic stroke development, progresses to manuscript proficiency and then cursive development.

The humanistic concern of our school district for meeting individual needs establishes and supports the emphasis on basic skills.

--from Dr. Bumgarner
Director of Instruction
Marietta City Schools

TWO NEW LANGUAGE SKILLS LISTINGS

Bloomington, IN -- The Indiana University Audio-Visual Center announces the release of A BASIC LANGUAGE SKILLS FILM COLLECTION (ELEMENTARY) and A BASIC LANGUAGE SKILLS FILM COLLECTION (SECONDARY), which describe, respectively, 104 and 123 films in various language arts curriculum areas available for rental from the Center.

Films included in each publication are listed under such topical headings as Communication Skills, Creative Writing, Grammar, Language Study, Phonics, Reading, Study Skills, and Writing Skills.

Copies of both A BASIC LANGUAGE SKILLS FILM COLLECTION (ELEMENTARY) and A BASIC LANGUAGE SKILLS FILM COLLECTION (SECONDARY) are available at no charge to users of the Center's services. For further information contact Media Information Services, Audio-Visual Center, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405, 812-337-2103.

--from Beverly Teach
Assistant to the Director
of Media Resources

* * * * *

MANY COMPETENCY TESTS ARE TRIVIAL

Emphasis on trivia and lack of student writing activities are the flaws found most frequently in competency tests reviewed by a committee of the National Council of Teachers of English. Members of the Committee to Evaluate Curriculum Guidelines and Competency Requirements, headed by Allan Dittmer, University of Nebraska, began last fall to write individual critiques of competency testing programs submitted by state and local education agencies and NCTE members. They are continuing to study new plans for competency tests, some of which determine whether students will be promoted or receive high school diplomas.

The reviewers found that competency tests trivialize English in a variety of ways. A test from a Western state, reviewed by Seymour Yesner of the Minneapolis Public Schools, "overemphasizes the forms of correctness" rather than the ability to communicate. "One can question whether capitalizing the 'beginnings of sentences,' or 'spelling correctly the words used' is as important as presenting the ideas in a logical sequence," Yesner notes. Reviewer James Hoetker, Florida State University, faults a Northeastern state competency test that makes "no mention at all of literature. . . . No mention at all of student creative work in writing or drama. No mention at all of attitudes or appreciation."

Educational consultant Evelyn Copeland, Fairfield, Connecticut, points to evidence of "fragmentation" in a West Coast school district program which tests capitalization skill by having students correct a single sentence, while the same skill is excluded from instructions to a student writing a sample. Thomas Gage, Humboldt State University, California, cites a lack of understanding of "qualitative differences among errors" in a New England state test for high school graduation. The test fails to recognize that "clarity of expression in a letter of application is more important than using the appropriate state abbreviation in the address." Gage's review of a district testing program in a Northwestern state criticizes the narrowness of "thirty-five performance indicators which are clearly utilitarian, . . . circumscribing . . . the curriculum so that little humanistic education can be provided."

Other reviewers echo Gage's concern that narrow tests will result in narrow school programs. Miles Myers, University of California, Berkeley, commenting on the effects of a Southern state testing program, claims that "It is difficult to imagine that such tests will not influence curriculum." Hoetker foresees the possibility that language arts teachers might be "reduced, in official terms, to remedial reading persons" if teachers gear classroom programs towards a competency test that reflects "utter lack of concern at the state level with any but the 'functional' outcomes of language instruction." Gordon Brossell, Florida State University, calls a Southern state's reading standards document "faddish" in its "emphasis on minimal learning. . . . There are no specifications for maximum goals; nor are there any suggestions for attaining them, whatever they are, either for school reading programs or for individual readers."

Most damaging of all, according to many of the reviewers, is the effect of language arts tests that do not involve actual student writing. Henry Maloney, University of Detroit, criticizes a large-city competency program because "teachers wishing to prepare their classes to pass these tests cannot do so by developing substantive writing assignments." Myers' review notes that "students are not asked to write anything. . . . (This state) apparently believes that it is more important to be able to edit seven types of errors than to write one or two paragraphs." Copeland believes that competency tests should involve "maneuvering language" and should give students "more opportunity to demonstrate their own degree of competence in actual writing."

Many of the competency testing programs reviewed by the committee did include writing samples. Eunice Sims, University of Georgia, commends a Midwestern city testing program that "demands a writing sample first, and an objective part next, placing the emphasis on writing." There are some signs of a trend towards requiring writing samples and rating them holistically. At an NCTE Conference for State and Local Coordinators of English and Reading Programs last November, participants reported surprising success in getting writing samples into competency programs. Use of tests involving primary trait scoring, holistic rating, revision and editing procedures, and sentence combining were reported.

Still in question is the larger issue, defined by Brossell as the "exaggerated importance" of testing in education today. "Periodic assessment is an integral part of any good educational program," Brossell says. "But ... increasing the amount of testing does not insure an increase in learning, as all good teachers know. Often it impedes learning, or worse, replaces it."

The National Council of Teachers of English is a professional organization of teachers and supervisors of English language arts programs at all levels of education.

--from Diane H. Allen
Public Relations Associate
NCTE

* * * * *

SOME DOS AND DONTS FOR COLLEGE ENGLISH STUDENTS

If an assignment is due on Wednesday, being absent on Wednesday does not make it due on Thursday.

Never justify an absence from an English class by explaining that you had to study for something important like chemistry or economics.

Nothing shows such blind devotion to the system or to the authorities as cheating and plagiarism do. Giving your effort is one thing; giving your character is another.

Statistical studies have shown that students who read the Post in class or work on another assignment during the lecture are poor marriage risks and are more apt to develop loathsome diseases in later life.

It is generally considered bad form to ask your teacher if anything happened in last Tuesday's class or if the instructor plans to do anything important next Friday.

By and large you cannot compensate for a sustained weak performance by sitting in the front row during the last week looking sincere.

Try not to raise your hand during an exciting discussion of beauty and truth to ask when your paper will be returned.

Remember that if you take 15 hours of class each quarter, pay about $3,000 a year in college expenses, and lose 30 weeks pay at the minimum wage, each hour you sit in a classroom will cost you over $13.00. You are allowed to hope that your instructor knows this too.

Don't sleep in class. Some over-sensitive teachers take this as a comment on their teaching. Most successful students, recent surveys have shown, have learned to sleep with pencil poised and eyes open.

When a teacher announces that class will not meet next Wednesday, try to groan, not applaud.

Remember that although the university has many silly requirements, stupidity is not one of them. Usually, that is.

--from Edgar Whan
English Department
Ohio University

CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

JANE AGEE teaches at the University of Georgia. She has published widely, both fiction and non-fiction.

DAVID BERGDAHL has been speaking to a number of community groups in conjunction with the "Southeastern Ohio Forum on Human Values." His "Ohio Speech" talks were the subject of a feature article in the March, 1979 issue of OHIO MAGAZINE.

JUNE BERKELEY, chair of the English Department of Fort Frye High School, has recently published "Literature, Imagination, and Learning," in ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS BULLETIN.

ROBERT BULLOCK is student teaching in Logan, Ohio. His article originated in a correspondence course at Ohio University.

MARILYN CARR teaches Vocational English in Defiance, Ohio. Her article was written for an independent study project at Ohio University.

TINA CURBY is student teaching in Logan, Ohio.

W. GEIGER ELLIS teaches at the University of Georgia. He edits the ALAN (Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of the NCTE) REVIEW.

SUE HOLT teaches at Grover Cleveland Junior High in Zanesville, Ohio.

ELLIOT L. JUDD is an Assistant Professor of Linguistics at Ohio University. His prime areas of research and teaching are TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), and sociolinguistics, especially language policy.

CAROLE KOONTZ teaches at Newark High School. She is now on leave, taking care of her first child and writing.

PATRICIA I. MAHIEU is currently Assistant Professor, Faculty of Early and Middle Childhood Education, at the OSU-Newark campus. Recently she completed eight weeks of post-doctoral study with Drs. Kenneth and Yetta Goodman at the University of Arizona. Her research interests include psycholinguistic teaching strategies and comprehension.

JOANNE MARTIN-REYNOLDS is from the Department of Educational Curriculum and Instruction at Bowling Green State University. EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP will soon publish her article, "Split-Screen Videotaping."

MARGARET MILES is a part-time lecturer in Composition and Children's Literature at Marietta College.

ROBERTA ROLLINS, chair of the English Department at Rutherford B. Hayes High School in Delaware, Ohio. She has lectured on innovative creative writing methods at the NCTE English Teachers Clinic Workshop in 1973.

HARLEY L. SACHS, Associate Professor of Technical Communication at Michigan Technological University, most recently published his writing text, "The Rhetoric of Technical and Scientific Writing." He is chairman of the Ethics Committee of the Society for Technical Communication. His simulation game, POLICE STATE, is sold mainly to high schools as a social studies and political science introduction to such societies.

SUSAN SCHULTZ is a doctoral candidate in English Language at Ohio University. She teaches Developmental English and Technical Writing.

WILLIAM L. SMITH teaches at Framingham State College in Massachusetts. He published "A Close Encounter of an Old Kind: Authoritarianism," in the December 1978 issue of the ENGLISH JOURNAL.

DANIEL TUTOLO teaches in the Educational Curriculum and Instruction Department at Bowling Green State University. Recently, he has published "Teaching Critical Listening" and "Attention: Necessary Aspects of Listening" in LANGUAGE ARTS.

SUSAN VAN CAMP, a graduate of OSU-Newark, teaches second grade in Hebrun, Ohio.